TWOONY

pictures of us

A NOVEL

A SUMMER ROMANCE THAT WAS NEVER MEANT TO BE SO SERIOUS

1. IMG 001
2. IMG 002
3. IMG 003
4. IMG 004
5. IMG 005
6. IMG 006
7. IMG 007
8. IMG 008
9. IMG 009
10. IMG 010
11. IMG 011
12. IMG 012
13. IMG 013
14. IMG 014
15. IMG 015
16. IMG 016
17. IMG 017
18. IMG 018
19. IMG 019
20. IMG 020
21. IMG 021
22. IMG 022
23. IMG 023
24. IMG 024
25. IMG 025
26. Q&A
27. Fan Art

IMG 001

Warning: If you can't understand or empathize with people making bad decisions, then this story isn't for you and I wrote this for fun so if you don't like it; stop reading. I ain't scared to mute people.

There are a plethora of things I dislike in life.

People who can't handle my amazing sarcasm, my fossil of a next door neighbor who constantly asks when I'm getting a haircut, clowns or anyone who likes them, and homework, especially summer homework because what kind of sick bastard would do such a thing?

Luckily for me, one of those dislikes is about to be cut off the list because, at the end of the week, I'm graduating.

It is time to leave the high school education system. I'm meant to join the college life where I will waste 4+ years of my life to receive a paper that reminds me of the crippling debt I earned, which will likely lead to severe stress and anxiety that's going to take 10 to 15 years off my life. I don't really care though seeing as living past 60 seems like a hassle and I'm not up to that.

Perhaps I should have taken up smoking in hopes to lessen my likely prolonged life because, seeing as I wish to die young, that means I will live a while, right? That is how the world functions; you get whatever you don't want because *god forbid* people actually achieve happiness.

On a more serious note, the idea of graduating is one that leaves me feeling a bit numb. Numb in the sense that I have so much on my mind that I can't seem to process all of it at once. Different emotions are going through me at different times for different reasons ranging from something small that I can look over, to something big that makes me lay in bed whimpering over how I'm meant to survive out in the real world.

On the one hand, goodbye high school, all the assholes in it and those stupid "clique's" that are made whether people continue believing in them or not. Goodbye to waking early Monday through Friday to attend a box, a prison cell really, filled with fellow inmates who are as frustrated and annoyed with seeing the same faces as I am. Goodbye high school drama, teachers who claimed *"you'll need this for the rest of your life so you better not forget it"* , and sitting through classes that have basically nothing to do with what anyone actually wants to do in life. Thanks, goodbye, farewell, sweet dreams!

It is nice thinking about leaving such a place, although, my high school experience hasn't really been a bad one. Not to toot my own horn but, I'm a fairly popular guy, getting along with most, going out to have fun on a regular basis with friends and never getting into much trouble.

However, high school is a dangerous place no matter how popular one claims to be. One little slip up and you can hit rock bottom, become the laughing stock of thousands of kids, the fuck up mascot of the school that will take the blame for everything. The thought of leaving all that is relieving because college seems less like a dog eat dog world and more like a, *"we're all trying to be adults now so lets at least try to play nice even if on the inside we want to claw each others eyes out"* . I prefer that even if 9 times out of 10 I'd probably just claw someone's eyes out.

On the other hand, hello depression followed by a series of panic attacks and existential crises after realizing that I'm on the road to becoming an adult. I'll have to do adult things like pay taxes, work, pretend to care when people speak to me as well as doing my laundry more than once a month. Hello sitting through classes that could last up to 3 hours, working on projects for hours, days, weeks, even months because that portfolio I'm building is basically going to be my life for the next 4 years.

Hello to wondering if anyone will ever make more than minimum wage, if it is worth going to school for a degree that doesn't even guarantee a job. Hello to meeting professors who honestly can't give a shit less about me or anyone because they have 101 other students with the same problem so, get over your damn self. Fix your own problems, you are now an adult, oh, and fuck you. Thanks, nice to meet you too, everyone go cry in a corner.

Of course, all that is my extreme exaggeration seeing as I still have a week left of school and no idea if college life will be that cruel. Everyone has heard stories and I'm simply giving myself low standards so that I won't be disappointed because...well, if you are always pessimistic life can't come in and fuck you up the ass since you are doing it to yourself already. That is my philosophy through life and so far it works!

If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

As much as I dread the idea of being an adult I'm also a bit excited in a totally sick and twisted kind of way. The sense of freedom that I'm going to get makes everything a bit exhilarating. I'm not sure how to explain my feelings with a single word, likely can't honestly.

Senior year flew by so fast that I didn't even realize it, which makes things a bit worse. How can a school year go by so quickly? In a blink of an eye would be an understatement. Without any notice I was driven into by a Mac truck and forced into reality that I'm graduating no matter how much I cling to the idea of remaining in high school that I have grown accustomed to. Even if I dig into the floors with teeth and nails I am still going to be forcefully dragged out and thrown into the big world that seems more like a gladiator's arena day by day.

Regardless of my extreme pessimistic and depressing views on graduating and life in general, my best friend doesn't seem to understand such thoughts. Pity, I have been trying for years to turn her to the dark side. It has yet to work, in a way, that is better seeing as someone has to be the ball of sunshine in our duo. It sure as hell ain't me.

"Three more days!" Olivia screams with her arms held high above her head. Her short legs kick about before her while she claps loudly, wildly, almost as if she's possessed. I wouldn't be surprised. Such happiness is clearly fake and needs to be destroyed. "Can you believe it, Mylo? Three days and we're out of here, gone, no more high school!"

I, with little to no enthusiasm, twirl my finger in the air while replying with the utmost sarcasm, "Yippee."

Olivia doesn't even acknowledge my lack of care, as she has grown accustomed to my need to sass. Damn, I need to step my game up.

"No more Mr. Michaels to tell me to stop wearing jeans with holes in them! No more Bobby Duntz pretending like we're still in the 6th grade and trying to take people's lunch money."

I snicker at that one.

"No more shitty cafeteria food or trigonometry!" Olivia slams her hands against her cheeks as if she just realized the answers to life itself. With her jaw hanging low, she looks to me with wide eyes that tell me how pleased she is at her realization. Heaven has been revealed to her, the sun has grown brighter; the world is full of bliss!

"I only need a basic college algebra class, Mylo. Mylo..." She proceeds to grab my arm and tug. With a quivering bottom lip, her eyes actually seem to water up a bit.

I roll my eyes, and she calls me dramatic?

"Only one math class, sweet potatoes and tomatoes this is great."

"Sweet potatoes and tomatoes?" I cock a brow, that's a new one.

Olivia is squealing again making my poor ears in need of a good popping. So, as I dig my finger into my ear pulling it away afterwards to flick whatever I may have gotten out at some poor freshmen walking past, I point out, "There will also be no Sonya Greggor."

Olivia's face plummets, as if she was on the moon and suddenly hit earth with enough force to knock every ounce of happiness out of her. I sneer while the girl lets go of me, her shoulders slumping and head dropping before she lets out a long heavy sigh, "Why you gotta hurt me like that?"

"I like the suffering of others. It's a huge turn on."

"You fucking sadist."

Snapping my fingers, I agree. "You right."

What can I say? I enjoy some good suffering. It's my guilty pleasure.

Olivia runs both her hands through her long brown hair. It always does as it pleases, remaining straight some days, curly the next, frizzy and wavy during the summer. It's why Olivia comes equipped with hats at all times. I always find her hats in the oddest of places too, like stuffed in her shoes, under seats, shoved into the couch cushions, literally, they are *everywhere* . I found one in *my* shoe once. I don't even want to ask how or why it got there.

Olivia begins to comb through the mess she calls hair, pulling it up then confining it to a ponytail before slipping the tail of it through the hole of her baseball cap. Once the mass is secured on her head, she looks to me, the shadow of her hat cutting over her brown eyes that are still clearly visible thanks to their natural sparkle.

"I'm...I'm g-g-gonna t-tell her," Olivia says with little to no confidence, which is normal for her. Unlike myself who often oozes, as some have put it, unworthy confidence, Olivia lacks confidence even in the things she deserves to be confident in.

She has been crushing on Sonya for a year, ogling her on the volleyball court, giggling to herself whenever Sonya so much as looks her way and all but passing out when she got invited to hang out with Sonya and her friends once.

Thank god I was with her or the poor thing would have been unconscious two minutes into the evening. Every time Sonya talks to her, Olivia gets lost in her crush's dark brown eyes, like they are as vast as space itself. As her best friend, it's adorable but as a hell spawn, it's disgusting. I'm not really sure how I feel about it.

"Really?" I ask, dragging out the 'y' until Olivia's eyes begin to twitch in annoyance.

"Yep!" She nods, nodding more and eventually gets up off the bench we're sitting on as if she is getting ready to go on a grand adventure. "I'm gonna do it! I'll tell her and...and..." Then reality must begin to set in because Olivia slowly sits back down, her hands clutching the bench while her eyes grow wide and she stares into the abyss of life. "And she's likely going to reject me, laugh in my face, stomp my sanity and tell me she isn't into girls and especially not me before strutting away with her beautiful black hair flowing in the wind like the queen that she is."

"That's a bit of an exaggeration, don't you think?" I hum, watching Olivia turn to face me with hopeful eyes. I crush that hope with a grin. "I don't think Sonya is the type to strut. It would be a normal walk."

Olivia's head drops. "I hate you."

"No need to sweet talk me, boo."

Olivia is not one to stay depressed though. Like I said earlier, one of us has to be the ball of sunshine and that task falls upon Olivia, who is rather good at it. Her head shoots back up moments before she jabs me in the nose with her finger, likely for revenge. I'm not expecting it so I push myself back to get away from her but she continues to poke me in the face until I swat her hand away with an annoyed hiss.

"What about you?" Olivia asks, bringing her hand back to hold her skateboard that is teetering on the bench, seeming to want to fall off. Her lips form into a thin line before she narrows her eyes on me in a very non threatening manner. "Are you going to talk to Jace?"

What the hell? I thought we were interrogating her, not me. I ain't down for this sort of talk that I know will lead to the same thing it always does.

"About?" I ask, quirking a brow while I rub my nose that has probably grown red thanks to her prodding.

"Your totally adorable crush-"

"Crush?" I grimace at the word, ew, no fucking way. A shiver runs down my spine that makes my entire body eventually follow. "If by crush you mean the fact that I want him to fuck me into oblivion then no, I'm not going to tell him about that."

Olivia ignores the fact that I claimed it isn't a "crush." Ignoring me and my need to make things vulgar in hopes to get rid of my chills, Olivia goes off to talk about my so-called crush. "Come on, you've been crushing on Jace since your sophomore year!"

"Correction, I've wanted to have sex with him since sophomore year," I interject but am ignored. I throw my hands up in disbelief but even that is ignored by Olivia.

Honestly, it's lust, that's all it is. He's fucking hot, I'm horny, I wanna have sex with him, end of story.

"This is your last chance. The boy that you've had your eyes on for years may never be seen again! We're graduating, Mylo. We can't have any regrets! What do you say?" Olivia looks at me with those big puppy dog eyes of hers that often talk me into doing many things I don't originally plan to do. It's hard to say no with her quivering bottom lip, bright eyes and hopeful expression but, honestly, I don't really feel the desire to say no.

It's not like I am worried about how Jace will respond. He's straight so I have accepted the fact that he'd likely be grossed out or try to brush me off, doesn't matter because it doesn't mean anything to me. However, I feel that I have to do as Olivia wishes because I don't want *her* to have regrets.

Olivia doesn't have much self-confidence regardless of the fact that she is a naturally pretty girl. She has never had herself a girlfriend and has always stuck to me since we were kids. I'm the fiery one, she's the calm one. Well, calm in her own sense.

Even if I am often a sassy little shit that's pessimistic, I'm also funny and friendly. I easily talk to others while Olivia quivers behind me. The only reason she has friends is because I drag her along whether she wants to go

or not. It's the only way I can get her to do anything other than skate or bike.

Even when I do try to be the loving best friend who reminds her how great she is, she brushes off my compliments like they are jokes. I'm not sure how things will go with Sonya but I know she is a sweet girl who will never hurt Olivia so if I have to "confess" to Jace so Olivia can get some happiness then...

"Fine," I grunt, flinching at the high pitched squeal followed by some Spanish that I can only assume is full of excitement. Once again, I tear into my ear with my pinky. "Could you not? I like hearing, thanks."

"It's a deal then!" Olivia brings up her hand, holding out her pinky until she sees me offer up the same pinky I used to dig some earwax from my ear seconds earlier. Olivia grimaces, drops her pinky and mumbles something about "gross boys" but quickly shakes her head. "By the end of the day, you better have talked to Jace and I'll have talked to Sonya, promise?"

I continue waving my earwax-covered pinky, waiting for Olivia to make the promise "official" while grinning ear to ear. She's not getting out of this, not without some battle scars.

She grimaces. "Use your other pinky."

"No way, I'm left handed," I argue, blinking my long eyelashes at her in a totally not so innocent way.

"I don't care! There's obviously earwax on your pinky! I can see-" Olivia screams when I suddenly reach for her hand and force the girls pinky to wrap around mine. She pulls her pinky away, waving her hand in the air wildly while claiming that she's going to have to cut it off. I roll my eyes.

"Please, you should be honored to receive anything from my body."

"I can feel the darkness consuming my soul already."

I choose not to mention how that darkness will be brightened later today after she talks with Sonya. Though I'm not sure how the other girl feels I'm confident that Olivia will come out unscathed...and if not then I'll have to cut a bitch but I guess we'll have to wait and see how things play out.

~

Important Note: Hi, please do not refer to my characters as sex positions, "top" or "bottom." They are Mylo and Jace, people with ever changing desires and interests. Please respect my request here and on my other stories, thank you.

This story is written for fun and, yeah, I really like it. If you don't, then stop reading. I'm not looking for "critiques" either because, *again* , this is for fun. I'd still love to hear what you think of Mylo and Olivia thus far though.

IMG 002

The school day goes by at a surprisingly quick pace, then again, it has been for the last week or so. Being seniors means slacking off and, obviously, I do exactly that. Sleeping through the majority of my classes or chucking wads of paper at fellow classmates to distract them-

"Fuck off, Mylo!" A very angry Gretchen shrieks at me after the second wad of paper gets stuck in the jungle that is her hair. Her face becomes flush when Mr. Haunder shouts at her for her language. I, on the other hand, am left off scotch free, snickering with Olivia a few seats back.

Olivia is making more ammunition and our friends learn very quickly how to duck and dodge effectively when our teacher isn't looking. Ah yes, the last week is a breeze and I'm enjoying every second of it.

However, there is a mixture of joy and dread in the air throughout the course of the day and somehow that equates to it ending in the blink of an eye. Upon thinking that, I realize how quickly life has gone by. One second I remember my father putting me on his shoulders to see over the crowd, the next I'm on the verge of standing on stage with a diploma while looking into the crowd. It's a daunting thought that has me shivering as the bell rings to signal our freedom.

"Good luck," I say to Olivia after I get up, trying to book it out of there before she can back out.

"W-Wait! Mylo, a-are we sure we wanna do this?" Olivia calls after me, running with her short little legs to catch up to me. At least I'm assuming she is by the sound of footsteps behind me and her voice growing louder.

I shrug just before she comes into my peripheral vision. "Why not? If I get to fuck Jace and you get Sonya then it's all-good. If we don't, we move on with our lives."

Olivia rolls her eyes at me. "You make it sound so easy."

"Because it is."

Her expression says she doesn't believe me. Her nose scrunches up in disbelief while she shakes her head before letting out a heavy sigh. "You're hopeless."

I don't get it but whatever. "Go get your princess and I'll see if the prince is feeling horny."

Olivia grunts, punching me swiftly in the side without any remorse. I let out a surprised yelp followed by a few groans while I rub my newly injured side. Olivia quickly leaves and I watch her disappear down the hall and around the corner.

I really do hope things go well for her. It would do her a lot of good to get herself a girlfriend. Get her some of that...V? If I said that she'd hit me.

I, on the other hand, don't really care how things go for me. I make my way to the club room without a care in the world. I do think over the possibility of lying about speaking with Jace but, I have this awful feeling Olivia may try interrogating him. If that happens she'll bug the hell out of me or spew some bullshit to Jace about how I'm *"totally in love with him"* because apparently the desire to fuck equates to love now. Whatever, she's bat shit crazy.

It doesn't take long to reach the photography club room that has been a part of my life since my freshman year. Though our activities have been over for some time we're having one last meet up to say goodbye to the seniors, obviously I being one of them.

Maybe I'm feeling nostalgic when I hesitate to grasp the handle, thinking of how I'll be stepping into the room full of memories that will soon be only that; memories. No more joking around with under class man, no more plans for club outings, no more taking silly pictures with each other before getting yelled at by Mrs. Yelenik.

Damn it, I'm making myself super fucking depressed. I need to stop this sentimental shit, it's starting to remind me that I have a heart. Ouch, is that

it beating? I forgot what it felt like.

With a deep sigh, I push open the door to find almost everyone has already arrived. It's not surprising to find them looking towards me, smiling and greeting me as they immediately begin to point out the fact that this is our last meeting together. I'm sure they did the same to Dillon, a fellow senior that is part of the club with me who obviously arrived earlier since I see him sitting on the windowsill across from the door.

Hearing their joking tones sting in a way but is uplifting at the same time. There goes my heart again, beating animatedly in my chest while causing my emotions to come forth. I really hate that. It's so much better pretending to be a robot that lacks the basic functions of human emotion.

"Mylo, how does it feel leaving us all behind?" Janet, a sophomore that I may have picked on the majority of my time here, asks with a smile that says she totally enjoyed me and my cruelty. We have a love hate relationship.

"I am leaving those who are beneath me behind so all is right with the world," I reply, sending her a wink causing the girl to gasp in fake offense.

"They're going to end up believing you with that tone," Dillon tacks on with a shake of his head. "That ego of yours will get you in trouble one day."

"And I'm sure it'll drag me right back out."

A familiar chuckle manages to reverberate through the room. I peer out of the corner of my eye at the very boy I am meant to speak with per Olivia's demands; Jace Cuevas.

With his warm brown complexion and hazel eyes so bright most mistake them for contacts, Jace gives off an aura of easiness. Dark brown hair that's short but thick. A stocky stature that would be intimidating if not for his goofy smile that is seen more often than not. To make matters worse, what Jace has on the outside is exactly what he has on the inside, kind and comforting. He's sweet to the point it's unhealthy and caring to the point that it's almost sad.

Damn him for it because it makes it so hard not to jump him everyday. What can I say? Hot guys get me all hot and bothered. Well, so do bad boys. Let's be honest, most boys get me hot and bothered. I have very little preference.

"Why are we even having a meeting?" Hayley asks, breaking me from my admiration of the fuck-able hunk that is Jace. I look towards the girl whose sitting at a desk with her arms crossed. "The yearbook has been long finished. It's weird to have a meeting at the end of the year."

"You could always quit the club," Dillon says, sending Hayley a playful grin that she rolls her eyes at. She obviously meant no offense by it, was simply asking but everyone is going to give her shit for it anyways...because we can, that's how life works.

"Now, now everyone, play nice," Mrs. Yelenik's voice comes in, appearing behind me just as her hand playfully ruffles the unruly red locks that is my hair. I huff while desperately trying to tame the beast that she awoke but to no avail.

Yep, it's ruined now, not that it was tamed before but whatever, I can blame her.

"I simply wanted us all to be able to have one last day together, besides, I didn't bring everyone here without planning to reward you all," Mrs. Yelenik says in a sweet voice moments before the doors open to reveal Tyrell and Don with boxes of pizzas. The entire room breaks out with strings of "thank you" and "I love you". Much like our other meetings, it goes by in a flash.

Everyone is joking, laughing, enjoying themselves as Mrs. Yelenik thanks us for the hard work we put in throughout the year. Memories of what happened over the years are shared. The more people speak the more it's hammered into me that I'm really graduating at the end of the week. As I look about the room filled with those I've seen so often that they've become a significant part of my life I feel a sense of sadness.

Graduating is one hell of an emotional roller coaster, that's for sure.

Before I realize it, everyone is saying their goodbyes, only this time it's for good. There's a chance I may pass them in the halls but with our separate grades, I doubt it. So, as the friends I made over the years pass me by, I hug them, wish them luck and try to remember their faces since I doubt I'll see much of them after the end of the week save for whatever they post on social media.

However, my routine is changed a bit when the number of people dwindle down and Jace makes his way to me. We're not exactly best buds but we aren't strangers either. He joined the photography club his freshman year, my sophomore year, and so we've *technically* known each other for a while. We say hi when we pass each other in the hall, speak when we're at the same event, wish each other happy birthday, all that jazz, but that's about it.

It's why I find it a bit odd to ask, "Jace, can you stay back to talk to me for a minute?

Jace, with wide eyes, looks from side to side as if he thinks there's another Jace I'm speaking to. When no one magically appears at his side, the boy glances back at me with that same look of confusion. It disappears in almost an instant, being replaced with his usual friendly smile that can make even the most uncomfortable of people feel at ease.

"Sure thing, Mylo," Jace says with a nod, returning to his seat while he waits without any explanation from me as to why.

Damn, he's far too nice because I probably would have told me to fuck off if I were him. However, he does exactly as I asked, waits patiently at his desk with his phone out like it's totally normal to do so.

I wonder who the hell manufactured him and what they are doing now. The world seriously needed more of him and I am willing to pay for that shit to be put back on the shelves. Ok, so I would probably buy the whole stock for sinful purposes but that's beside the point.

Anyways, after everything is said and done, I call for Jace to come with me. He doesn't bother to ask why nor does he appear troubled to be following me out of the class to the exit. Neither of us say anything while we walk

side by side, exiting the doors to find ourselves in the nearly vacant parking lot. A few stragglers are leaving, probably those like us who were with their clubs having a last meeting. However, it's quiet and remote so I feel like I can get this over with.

"You're probably wondering why I asked you to stick around," I say, bringing my hand up to tousle my hair like that will help at all. Damn, it feels hot and I hope that I'm not appearing as embarrassed as I feel.

Jace doesn't seem to take notice of my odd behavior nor does he appear bothered by it. Rather than respond, Jace simply shrugs, further proving he doesn't mind.

Damn, part of me wishes he would be a little annoyed. Why is he always so freaking calm and nice? Maybe I'm just mean? Yeah, that sounds about right.

Anyways, back to the point, I take a deep breath before I try to determine how to say this. I could be classy and not tell him that I want to fuck him or I can be honest and ask him to fuck me. However, looking to Jace, who seems so *innocent,* though I'm fairly sure he's not with the amount of girls he's dated, I can't seem to bring myself to do it.

I guess I'm going to be "classy".

"I have a crush on you," I blurt out while staring straight into Jace's now quivering hazel eyes. He does seem to be taken aback for a moment but there's no anger or distaste in his expression, rather it seems to only be confusion.

Normally I have *some* tact but seeing as I'm doing this with absolutely no hope for Jace to agree, I may as well get it over with. It will be easier to hear him say no and we both move on.

"Probably not what you expected to hear," I mumble, dropping my hand to my side. "But I'm graduating at the end of the week so, fuck it, want to date?"

I don't even have time to think of how he'll deny me before he replies.

"Sure."

Hold the fuck up. ***What?***

"Lets go ahead and exchange numbers then." Jace pulls out his phone, holding it before me like he has total faith that I won't search for his nudes or something. He shouldn't because I totally would, that shit would be gold. However, my brain is too busy blowing the fuck up to process what the hell is happening to take advantage of the situation.

"Mylo?"

"Uh...did you hear me correctly?" I ask, staring at Jace in bewilderment. His facial expression no longer shows confusion, mine is though. Now he seems calm, like he wasn't just confessed to by another guy. Last I checked Jace is straight... *right* ?

"I did," Jace answers, shaking his phone to remind me that he wants my number. Without really thinking about it, I give him my number, handing the phone back before it even registers with me that I did such a thing. "Ah, but I have plans this evening so I'll have to talk to you later, ok?"

"Yeah, that's fine...it's cool."

Is it? Is it cool though?

Because this is kind of serious and Jace is handling it like it isn't serious. He's slipping his phone into his pocket with that soft smile of his like he didn't just agree to date me...a guy, a very openly gay guy.

"Ok, I'll talk to you later then!" Jace waves, smiling so genuinely that I can't help but smile stupidly back.

Wait, don't smile! Fucking ask him what's going on...oh, wait, he's already gone and I'm still smiling so it wouldn't have worked even if he had stayed.

Sighing, I press my hands against my face, twisting my fingers into the red locks of my hair while I try to process what happened. It doesn't work though. No matter how much I ask myself *what the fuck* I don't get a response other than a repeat of *what the fuck* .

Somehow I went from confessing to Jace because I wanted to help Olivia with absolutely no hope that anything will come of it to...dating him?

What...the fuck?

~

Note: Mylo really doesn't have a crush on Jace. Does he find him physically attractive and think he's a nice guy? Yeah. But no "I seriously wanna date this person because I like them." I'm just bad at making Mylo only seem lustful.

I know, not my usual set up. Normally y'all gotta wait 20 chapters for official dating status xD This story is certainly different than my norm but I hope you still enjoy it! So what do you think of Mylo and Jace?

IMG 003

"How did things go?" I ask Olivia later that evening while I'm attempting to multi task by talking to her and cooking my dinner. I decided on some grilled chicken and mac n' cheese because I'm a growing boy and only need two things in life: meat and cheese.

"I, well...it went...good?" Olivia answers with a sort of confused tone that has me furrowing my brow.

"Good as in, what?"

"I asked her to the movies...but didn't say if it was like a date or not," Olivia responds, her words getting quieter until her last is nearly nothing more than a quiet breath.

This woman!

I let out a heavy sigh before backing away from the stove to lean against the island in the kitchen while I watch my food. Tapping my foot against the floor, I growl, "That wasn't the plan. You were supposed to confess your undying love and get yourself a hot girlfriend."

"I know!" Olivia cries loudly into the phone. I pull it away in order to save my hearing until the cry dies down. With her around I'm going to end up needing a hearing aid by 30! "But when I got to her all that came out was that and she agreed so I didn't push it! I'll...I'll see how the movies go and maybe I'll tell her?"

"Whatever, at least make out with her at the theater. Everyone knows teens pay a shit ton of money just to make out in theaters."

Olivia ignores my totally awesome suggestion in favor of asking her own question, "What about you? How did things go with Jace?"

Shit, I forgot that bringing up Sonya meant Jace had to be brought up as well. I don't really want to talk about that seeing as I'm not entirely sure what the hell happened. He did text me a little bit ago simply asking if I made it home ok. I responded and I saw he messaged back but haven't replied since I'm talking to Olivia.

It's strange because there's no way he was serious, right? He had to of misheard me or he's actually not as kind as he appears. He could be messing with me, playing a joke on the fag while pretending to be a nice guy. That doesn't sound like him though...I have no fucking clue what's going on with my life.

Oh, wait, that's normal for me.

"Uh...it went...good?" Great, now I sound like Olivia.

"Why are you saying that like it's a question? Was it not actually good?"

"Fuck if I know."

Olivia snorts and I move to take my food off the stove since it's done. As I'm scraping it all onto a plate, Olivia goes on to inquire, "How can you not know? What did he say?"

"Ok."

"He said ok to what?"

"I told him I had a crush on him, asked if he wanted to date and he said ok." That's as basic as it gets and that's honestly exactly what happened. There's nothing else to tell her so of course Olivia is stumped because she doesn't respond for a moment.

Yeah, fucking crazy, right? I haven't a clue either!

"That's it? So you two are dating?" Olivia sounds as confused as I am. Good to know that I'm not the crazy one, apparently Jace is.

"Fuck if I know," I repeat, moving myself and my food into the empty living room. My eyes glance at the calendar, checking the date for dad to return, which isn't for another two weeks. I frown but quickly brush it off and focus on speaking with Olivia.

"Well, how can you not know? Are you sure you just didn't freak out when he said he'd date you and forgot what actually happened?"

"Please." I roll my eyes while taking a seat on the couch to begin eating. "That's what happened, Olivia. We exchanged numbers and he messaged me earlier and I guess we're...dating?"

It sounds weird to say that because it doesn't feel true. This isn't how dating works, at least it hasn't been my experience thus far. Normally there's time spent getting to know one another, all that shit like hanging out one on one while Jace and I have had none of that. Maybe I made the wrong decision and Jace is actually some sort of psychopath who is going to disembowel me and serve my innards for dinner! I chuckle at my own stupid thoughts.

Olivia sounds flabbergasted, suddenly muttering under her breath, which I can't understand even if she didn't mutter it. Sighing, the girl goes on to ask, "Are you happy with that?"

"If I get laid I will be."

"Mylo!"

I shrug even if the girl can't see me and, with a mouth full of food, reply, "Hey, I confessed or whatever, right? That's what I was supposed to do and now I got a smokin' hot boyfriend that may or may not be fucking with me."

"But if he is that isn't ok!" Olivia exclaims, sounding very distraught about something that I honestly don't see an issue with unless he is a whackjob. "What if he is messing with you?"

I continue stuffing my face, uncaring of whether or not it annoys Olivia, which it does because she told me once before but, hey, what else are friends for?

"If I get to at least make out with him then it'll be worth it."

Olivia sighs and I can totally envision her tugging at her hair. I drive her nuts, it's what I do best. "You are unbelievable, Mylo."

"You love me."

Olivia neither confirms nor denies my statement but it's ok, she doesn't need to cause I know the truth. With yet another sigh, Olivia goes on to say, "I guess it's rude to assume he has bad intentions but...you two weren't exactly close before so I thought he'd at least have some questions. Plus, I always assumed he was straight too."

"My good looks must have changed his mind."

"Can you be just a little serious?"

I consider it for all of a second before answering with a chipper, "Nope."

I can feel Olivia's glare through the phone. There is actual heat seeping through my phone right now but all it does is bring me joy.

"Fine, just...be careful, Mylo. I don't want some dumb boy breaking your heart," Olivia says sounding sincere, which I know she is.

Shrugging, I respond as jokingly as I have been this whole time, "You need a heart before someone breaks it."

"True." Olivia giggles and our conversation changes drastically from there.

After hanging up I move onto editing some pictures I took of Olivia a few days ago. She hates being my model but I love catching her in some action shots. She seems more willing if her bike or skateboard is involved so I can settle with that, it's good practice.

While editing, my phone goes off. Not really thinking about it, I look at it to see whose messaging me and, though the new message isn't from Jace, I'm reminded that I never replied to him earlier.

The question is, *should I* ? The guy is clearly messing with me. Why would he so quickly agree to go out? The answer should be; *because he likes you!*

But he didn't exactly look overjoyed to have been asked out, not to say he looked unhappy either. There's this suspicion lingering in the back of my mind continuing to point out that it's weird. Maybe it's my mind's' way of reminding me that relationships are never easy nor simple so I should just break it off before it starts.

Sighing, I ignore my new message from some guy I stupidly gave my number to at a party in order to read over Jace's earlier message.

Do you have plans after school tomorrow?

My initial response is to ask why or even be blunt about it and ask if he's jerking me around. I wouldn't mind if he jerked me around...wait, brain, can you not be a pervert for like two seconds? This is serious and I need to come up with a response.

I opt for ignoring him, tossing my phone aside before turning the music up on my computer. I don't receive another message from Jace for the rest of the night.

~

"You didn't reply?" Olivia asks the following day at school after I told her about getting Jace's message.

"No," I answer with a shrug, kicking my locker door shut. He messaged me good morning too but I replied with a simple 'morning' to that one. "Figured if he is messing with me then I'm gonna be a pain the whole time."

"That-" Olivia stares at me like she thinks I'm an idiot. Rude, I have excellent grades and helped her through all her math courses! So ungrateful. "Just break it off and save yourself the trouble."

"But what if I miss the opportunity to shove my tongue down his throat?" Because if I do I will never forgive myself!

Olivia goes blank, her eyes slowly closing while she takes a deep breath. I think she's ready to lecture me but she has accepted the fact that it doesn't work. With a shake of her head, she waves off what I said. "I have...no words, just none."

Before I can respond to Olivia, the girl gestures behind me with an evil grin. Curious, I turn around to see what she's pointing to.

Jace is at the end of the hall speaking to a few girls who seem to have stopped him on his journey to who knows where. As usual, he gives a genuine smile, speaking with them about something that makes them all giggle. I feel my eye twitch with annoyance, wondering how he can be so bright even early in the morning. Morning people can't be trusted!

Jace ends the conversation quickly though, waving goodbye to them before making his way towards us.

Wait, towards us? Fuck. Uh, quick, think of a reason to leave!

"Have fun talking to your-kind of-lover boy." Olivia bolts without warning, leaving me to my doom and with no hope of escaping because Jace is at my side a literal second later.

"I didn't know Olivia could run that fast," Jace says and looks to me with that soft smile of his that...that is ridiculously good looking and I fucking hate it. Damn it, stop staring at me like that! It's too early to look at those pearly whites, my eyes!

"She normally doesn't," I grumble, leaning back against the lockers. That bitch is getting it later, I'm going to steal all her hats! She won't know what to do without them! Freaking traitor.

"What are your plans after school?" Jace asks, not mentioning how I didn't respond to that question last night. I even wait a few seconds to answer, watching Jace for any sign of annoyance. There isn't any, he doesn't look bothered that he was ignored but maybe he thinks I just didn't see it? Who knows!

"Nothing much," I respond with a shrug.

Hold on a sec, shouldn't I have lied? I totally have plans, 100% have plans like a lot of them with all my friends. I'm *so busy* because I have a life! I should have said that, why the hell didn't I? I can do that now, yeah, yeah-

"Want to hit up Oliverio's and catch a movie after?"

Shit, is it too late to lie now? Probably, especially since Jace is staring at me expectantly. That smile is still on his face showing off those adorable dimples, fuck me, I can't handle this shit.

"Long as you're paying," I reply, hey, if I'm agreeing to this then, damn it, I am making the most of it!

Besides, who knows what he has planned. Maybe we'll get there and he'll spit in my food or talk during the whole movie. I will end his life if he does either of those things though so if that is his plan then he's the one who will regret it!

"Of course." Jace chuckles, his eyes sparkling with amusement. "Meet me here after class?"

I nod, smiling at Jace because it feels a bit weird not to be doing that. Jace gives a cute wave goodbye before heading in the direction of what I'm assuming to be his morning class. It isn't until after he's out of my view that it sinks in...

We're going on a date.

It's totally a date, right? Like even if he's messing with me, which he has to be, it still constitutes as a date. We're going out to eat then seeing a movie, it's the textbook date that I've been on plenty of times. Sure, some of those times we never made it to the movies but I doubt Jace is the type to dine then fuck...or maybe he is, that's fine by me!

But, is this even a good idea?

Like Olivia said, shouldn't I save myself the trouble and break it off? But if he does want to at least make out I can get a sweet little taste. Damn, I wish I would think more with the head on my shoulders rather than the one between my legs.

Shrugging, I decide the hell with it, I'll go. There's no harm in getting a free meal and movie. Besides, it's not like the kid can break my heart. I'm not expecting anything out of this. It's fine.

~

I love writing as Mylo, he's a hoot! But is he over thinking everything? Does Jace actually like him? How is their date going to go? Let me know what you think!

IMG 004

Olivia may not have been pleased with my decision to meet up with Jace for dinner and a movie but she got over it. I promised I would discuss it with her afterwards so that got her to leave me alone about it. However, I think I've decided on a plan.

If Jace really is messing with me then he wouldn't want to do anything "serious" in public, right? So say kissing for example, is that allowed? Is he open to that idea?

Because I have been open with everyone since I was 14 and I don't plan on changing that. I don't do any of that "lets keep us a secret" bullshit because with my personality it will only end in catastrophe. Not to say I will out him without his permission. I'm not *that much* of an asshole but I sure as hell don't want to be a secret.

Say Jace doesn't want to be open, then I'll make him uncomfortable with it. He'll run away with his tail between his legs after I've gotten a few good kicks out of him. I won't do anything too mean, I swear! I'll start out slow and go from there. Lets see how far this guy's willing to take it. Let's prank the prankster!

After class, which isn't much of anything considering it's the last week for me, I meet up with Jace at my locker.

I'm a little shocked to see him already waiting there. The hot piece of shit is leaning against my locker with his phone in hand. He's texting away with this soft smile and sparkle in his eyes that I can say I haven't seen before. Maybe that irks me a bit and maybe I make myself known by kicking him in the shin but that's not the point.

"Ouch!" Jace yelps, looking at me with wide eyes. "What was that for?"

"Stop staring at your phone like a love sick puppy," I say, crossing my arms when the boy gives me a shocked stare. "What? You expected me to not

notice and act like it doesn't bother me?"

Jace tries to mumble some sort of excuse, explaining that he didn't look like a lovesick puppy. I ain't buying it and, honestly, it's fun teasing him.

"Sorry, I don't play that game. I'm the jealous type y'know and since you've made me mad you're going to have to pay for it."

"Huh?" Jace looks flabbergasted by my honesty. I don't see why, I've always been told that I never think before I speak. Olivia says I don't have a filter and that is 100% accurate.

"You have to act like a proper gentlemen today," I order, grinning at the pure confusion on Jace's face. "Open the car door for me, push my chair in at the restaurant, the whole shebang!"

I expect Jace to scoff at me or tell me I'm being an idiot. However, I get a different reaction that makes my cheeks warm just a smidge.

Jace starts to laugh, not in annoyance but in actual amusement. His shoulders shake when he goes on to say, "You're really funny, Mylo. I guess I can't say no to that."

Oh...ok, well, maybe that was too easy for him. I'll step it up a notch later.

With that, Jace and I head out to his car since we decided to take his. I'll pick mine up later. I'm a little shocked that he actually does as I ask and opens the door for me. He even winks at me once I'm in the car causing me to stick my tongue out at him. Jace chuckles and soon we're on our way to Oliverio's.

I'm making myself comfortable by placing my bag in the back seat. I never toss it since my camera is in there and if it broke I would probably kill someone. Even if it's my fault, I would kill someone else. As if I would harm my own beautiful face!

"Do you ever go anywhere without that?" Jace inquires, gesturing to the camera in my backpack. Its strap is currently hanging out from the slightly

opened zipper.

I shake my head in response. "No way, you never know when you can get a good shot."

"You really are a proper photographer."

"Proper?"

"I mean, you actually enjoy it and work at it. There's no one else like you in the photography club," Jace explains, shrugging like he's not sure how else to explain it.

"Everyone's pretty good though."

"Yeah, but you're definitely the best."

"Trying to flatter me? I still haven't forgiven you for earlier."

Jace gasps in fake offense. "But I'm being a proper gentlemen, aren't I?"

"Try harder."

Jace nods, his smile remaining, which only causes my stomach to do these stupid flips that are really pissing me off. If you could chill that'd be great. And Jace, could you stop being so cute? I need to have a breather here, thanks.

"When you say it like that though, it sounds like you don't think you're that good at photography," I go on to say, changing the subject back to what it once was.

"I like photography but it's a small time hobby, nothing more," Jace explains, glancing at me from the corner of his eye. "But you're pretty serious about it. I heard you saying you're going for Fine Arts in college with a focus in Photography, right?"

"Yeah, I can't really see myself doing anything else. Then did you join the photography club only because it's a hobby?" I ask while leaning back into

the seat, allowing my head to sway to the left so that I can see Jace better.

What can I say, he's nice eye candy!

"Originally I just wanted to make some friends. Being a freshman made me nervous and I thought if I joined a club I'd automatically meet new people and make friends. I enjoyed photography but I definitely came to like it more after I joined."

"That's because photography is awesome."

"I get the feeling if anyone said otherwise you would be personally insulted."

"I'd punch the fucker."

My blunt response has the both of us laughing. The car ride goes smoothly all the way to Oliverio's after that. Once there Jace opens my door with a teasing grin like he was told. I actually feel more embarrassed with him opening the door than him doing it! This is bullshit!

The two of us head in, getting ourselves a table where, yet again, Jace accepts my "challenge". I feel my cheeks warming up a bit after he pushes in my chair. Some people are staring, a few girls even giggle while I angrily grumble about my plan somehow backfiring.

We order our food and talk some more. Jace has always been easy to talk to and that definitely hasn't changed. Maybe I thought we'd be a little awkward but it's honestly totally normal. There's no tension, nothing awkward hanging in the air. We talk like we have always done so before and, in a way, that pisses me off.

I'm not sure why and I'm not sure how to explain it. It makes me irritable how well things are going and maybe that is the reason? Because if Jace were serious, which he clearly isn't, then wouldn't there be some other feeling here? Wouldn't it feel different? Instead, I feel like I'm out with a friend, *just a friend* .

Not to mention the jackass won't stop texting. It's not constant but from time to time I catch him pulling out his phone. He responds to someone, probably a girl based on that dumb smile he's wearing each time, then acts like he never did it. At first I think I'm imagining it but it's definitely happening and, yeah, it bugs me.

Do I bring it up?

Nah, like I said, I'm not expecting anything from this.

If Jace likes a girl that, for some reason, he can't date and is instead "dating" me then I don't care. I'm getting free food and movies out of the deal so it's all-good. Besides, I'm just going to play along and see how well the kid does, how long he lasts with my annoying ass. It should be interesting.

After the movie is over we walk around the mall a bit. We stop in a few stores where I learn that Jace has a thing for blue apparently. No matter where we go I swear he finds a blue shirt that he likes but never gets.

I end up laughing about it while asking, "Is blue your favorite color?"

"Yeah...kind of boring, huh?" Jace responds, setting aside yet another blue shirt he had his eye on.

"Why would it be boring?"

"Blue is the-" Jace holds his hands up to make quotation marks in the air while he speaks in a mocking tone. "Manly color."

"A color is nothing more than a color, it doesn't have to do with gender."

"What's yours then?" Jace inquires causing me to scrunch my nose up. Somehow we have gotten on such a typical topic, like asking about the weather.

"Magenta."

"That's very specific."

"I'm the type of man that knows what I want."

Jace doesn't seem at all shocked to hear that. Shaking his head, the two of us head up to the counter to get the shirt that Jace seems to have finally caved into getting. We're standing at the cash register together when the cashier comes to ring us out. The moment Jace smiles at her she blushes. Damn, that smile of his is going to be a pain in the ass. It makes him look all-charming.

Fine, lets see how well he does with " *clingy boyfriend mode.* "

I lean against Jace's side without warning, not so close that it's obvious we're dating but close enough to make the cashier uncomfortable. Jace looks at me with wide eyes then back at the cashier who gives me an odd glance. All I do is smile back while I press myself a tad closer to Jace's side. He isn't pushing me away though so perhaps this still isn't far enough?

"Have a nice day," the cashier says after handing Jace his bag. He gives her another cute smile before walking off with me right behind. Maybe I throw her a dirty look over my shoulder but that's beside the point.

"I never took you as the clingy type," Jace says out of the blue making me whip my head back around to stare at him. I'm not surprised to see him grinning at me teasingly.

"I'm not," I answer immediately, crossing my arms and giving him a scowl to show that I'm being deadly serious. Ok, maybe I'm not but I am trying to test him. "I wanted to see how you'd react."

"Huh?"

"You're always all Mr. Charming with the ladies so I wanted to see what you'd do if your boyfriend got a little clingy in front of your fans."

"Fans?" Jace shakes his head. "You know, you're a weird guy, Mylo."

"What does that make you?"

"Insane?"

I slap him over the back of the head for that one. All it does is make him cackle. Well, doesn't seem that bothered him either. I even went and called myself his boyfriend, which he didn't deny so that means...he does see us as boyfriends? Insane really is starting to describe him more and more though.

I'm seriously starting to think I should just straight up ask him. Did he take my confession seriously? But if he really is jerking my chain then he won't answer seriously, right? Fuck this is confusing. I've never had this much issues with dating before!

Well, yeah I have. My relationships have all been pretty shit. I've been told that I *"I get fired up easily"* then *"don't take it seriously when I should,"* which is true, I can't deny that. It's just how I am, I turn everything into a joke but when I do take it seriously I practically explode. It's a rough combination. Dating has never been that great for me so I've stuck with the occasional fling but even those flings are simpler than this shit.

Before I know it, Jace has arrived at the school parking lot where my car is waiting for me. He gives me a smile when I finally come out of my daze.

"Tomorrow is your last day, right? Graduation is Friday."

"Yeah, it is."

"Mind if I come?"

"Uh...sure, it'll be boring though." All I'm doing is getting a piece of paper. I don't see why he would want to go.

"No it won't, you're graduating, that's awesome! I'll definitely be there."

I nod because I can't really get myself to say no when he's looking at me like that then step out of the vehicle. It isn't until I'm inside my own car that Jace finally leaves. I can't help but feel that he's treating me like all his other girlfriends. Maybe that's a good thing because I haven't heard any of his girlfriends say a single bad thing about him. I don't know why they broke up but they always did yet somehow there aren't a million dirty rumors spread about him.

That doesn't make sense to me. Jace doesn't make sense to me.

Maybe I'm thinking about this all too much. Perhaps Jace has always been bisexual but never really thought about trying to date a guy until now?

But why agree to go out with me? Because I was the first person to confess? If that's the case I'm definitely going to beat his face in for it!

Unless I get laid...because, honestly, I'd love that.

~

Jace and Mylo's first "date," what do you guys think? Is Jace serious? What plans do I have for these two? :D

IMG 005

Graduation is as boring as I thought it would be. I have to sit in this disgusting red gown while in a hot gymnasium filled with other students. We're called up one by one to retrieve our diploma's and it's the absolute worst. Even with the AC on it feels like we're sitting out in the summer heat. I want to scream and rip my hair out but I love my hair too much to do that. Instead, I end up waiting until the ceremony is finally over.

I'm free!

"I can't believe we're graduated!" Olivia squeals, jumping into my open arms the moment she can. I spin the girl around in circles for a moment before placing her back on her feet.

"Yeah, doesn't feel real, does it?" I smirk at the diploma in my hand. Well, it's fake, the real one will be sent in the mail but, whatever, it's the thought that counts!

"Speaking of things that don't feel real." Olivia gestures behind me causing my head to turn back and find Jace sitting in the bleachers. They are currently letting everyone out to join their loved ones on the gym floor. Jace is kind of stuck at the moment behind everyone so I've got some time until he gets down here.

"It was definitely sweet of him to come," Olivia says with a nod. "Have you talked to him about whether he's actually serious yet or not?"

"Oh yeah, I asked him yesterday while I was sucking him off. We made excellent conversation."

Olivia plunges her fist into my gut. I cough at the unexpected hit then rub the sore spot while grinning at her glare. What? She walked into that.

"I'm serious, Mylo! I'm worried."

"You shouldn't be, besides, you have yourself to worry about." I point behind Olivia to her beloved Sonya, who is looking over at us with a huge smile. Her black hair is curled around her shoulders, the red of the gown only making her deep brown skin more beautiful. Olivia is practically a pile of goo while looking at her.

"Ah...y-yeah, w-we're going to the movies t-tomorrow." Olivia waves like a lovesick puppy at the girl who waves excitedly back. These two are going to kill me.

"I swear to everything in this world that is sinful and impure, if I don't hear there was at least some tongue action at the theater I will end your life."

Olivia flushes furiously at my "perverted comment" that has her storming off a moment later. I laugh but smile when I see her walk right over to Sonya. She seems more than happy to see Olivia, even pulling her in to take a few pictures. I don't get why she's so worried, from my viewpoint Sonya totally has a thing for her too. They better get together or I will find Cupid and murder that little fucker!

"They make a cute couple."

I jump at the sound of Jace's voice, turning to face the boy that has somehow made it to my side. He smiles and goes on to play with the tassles hanging off my graduation hat.

"Red suits you," he says with that stupid fucking smile of his that makes my toes curl. Gah, stop, you're making me imagine what else that mouth could do. I cannot get a boner in this damn thing!

"Thanks." I slap his hand away, removing the hat afterwards so my hair can be free. I had to use bobby pins to get the thing on right so I pull those out too, allowing my hair to fall just above my shoulders. I brush most of it from my face, ruffling it a bit in hopes to keep it back.

"Where are your parents?" Jace asks, turning his head from side to side in an attempt to find my them.

I can't blame him for asking. Graduation day is when all the folks come out to see their kids walking across that stage. They are crying, taking pictures, hugging and congratulating their kids on a great achievement. It's natural but, for me, I always knew mine wouldn't be here.

I shrug and respond, "My mom isn't around anymore and my dad is on a business trip overseas. He'll be back-" I tilt my head to the side while trying to remember the exact date. "Next week? No, maybe the week after."

I scratch at the back of my neck upon realizing that I can't remember the date. Eh, it shouldn't be surprising though. He leaves and returns so often that I'm more accustomed to him not being there at all. It's perfectly normal to me but, for some reason, it appears to bother Jace.

"He couldn't make it back for his kids graduation?" Jace asks with a furrowed brow. "Surely he knew the date and could have found some way to get around work to be here."

"It's no big deal. It's just graduation."

"It's a huge deal, Mylo!" Jace argues with a scowl while I'm left staring at him in confusion. "Your parents should be here to tell you how proud they are. You worked hard to graduate and you're even going to college that...that's a great accomplishment."

My chest suddenly feels a little tight. While Jace is staring at me with this serious expression, I'm not sure what sort of face I'm making. My cheeks feel a bit warm but I think my forehead is creased. I don't really know and I'm not really sure what I'm feeling and that makes me uncomfortable.

"Ah, well, too late to complain about it now," I say with yet another shrug of my shoulders. "He's not here but you are." I pat the boys' cheek, which seems to shock him. "What a cutie, are you going to give me a reward tonight?"

Jace doesn't appear happy with my aversion but, thankfully, he drops it. Rolling his eyes, he insists that we get a picture together. I'm more than willing and go running off to my car in order to retrieve my camera. I'm

back in no time, quickly pulling my hair up into a ponytail to concentrate better.

I kind of ignore Jace a bit, not that I mean to but when I'm taking pictures everything else just sort of fades from existence for me. I'm focusing on the people I'm capturing in my lens, what are they feeling? What do I want people to feel while looking at his photo? What is the best angle? When can I take this shot? I'm basically doing a free photo shoot but it's our graduation. Obviously we need pictures to commemorate the moment!

I make sure to take multiple ones of Olivia. She's smiling in every one and blushing like crazy in the few I get with her and Sonya. I even drag Jace into a few, which he seems a bit hesitant to do but caves after the second or third time. It isn't until the end of the night that Jace finally gets me to take a breather.

"I wanted *us* to get a picture together," he says, stealing my camera from my grasp, which is never a good thing. I'm ready to gnaw his hand off when he suddenly pulls me into his side. My cheeks warm at the feel of his arm wrapping around my shoulder, pulling me close so that he can lean his head against my own.

"Smile," he says, holding up my camera to get a shot of us together. I'm not sure if I smiled or not but whatever the photo is seems to have pleased Jace because he's grinning ear to ear while examining it.

"Can I have my camera back now?" I ask, holding out my hand but the bastard has the audacity to keep my camera to himself.

"Nope," he chirps. "We're going out now."

"Out?"

"I'm sure you're hungry. Lets get something to eat."

Seriously?

I look about the gymnasium to find Olivia is still with her parents. Some people are beginning to leave, likely to head out and have their own celebration. I know Olivia will be spending time with her parents. She did ask me to come along but I didn't want to bother them. Tonight is about Olivia for her parents so I didn't want to intrude.

My plans were to go home and have dinner but...

"Are you paying again?" I smirk at the pout Jace gives me.

"You're going to drain me dry."

"Baby, you have no idea."

I send Jace a playful wink that his him going from 0 to 100 real quick. It seems he has to swallow the lump in his throat because I can see him doing that from here. Sputtering some Spanish that I definitely don't understand Jace spins on his heel and heads out. Obviously I have to follow him because he still has my camera!

I have to take my gown off before we get into the car, quickly tossing it into the back seat. I fix my button down shirt then slide into the passenger side while Jace is in the driver's seat. Carefully, he places my camera in the back, which has me grinning at him. He probably knows I will end his life if he hurts my baby.

"Where to?" He asks before starting up the car.

"Somewhere expensive."

"Really?" He rolls his eyes at me.

"I'm high class. If you can't handle me, we can break up."

"I don't know about high class but you're certainly a hand full."

I scoff, crossing my arms childishly while I lean back into the seat. The entire drive I give Jace the silent treatment while he tries to get me to talk. He's grinning the whole time too, probably because he can tell I'm not

actually mad. Damn, I need to work on that because I want him to be shaken up a bit. Sadly, my acting skills aren't on point enough for that and we get to the steak house Jace has decided upon in no time.

Once inside and comfortably seated, I'm looking through the menu trying to decide on what to eat when I notice that yet again Jace is texting someone. It appears that he knows what he wants because he's leaning back in the booth with his phone out typing away. I'm starting to think he's unaware of the face he makes while texting the mystery woman. Well, could be a guy I guess, whatever, either way he's making a face.

He looks love stricken. There's this soft smile on his face that irks me beyond belief. His eyes are half mast with a certain shine to them that makes me sick. He's so concentrated that he jumps the moment I slam my hands against the table.

He looks at me with wide eyes, confused by the smile I give before I ask, "Sorry, were you concentrating on something? I was just going to ask what you were ordering."

"Uh...steak," Jace answers like it should be obvious, which I guess it is since we're at a steakhouse. "What about you?"

"Who are you texting?" I ask, completely ignoring Jace's own question. "The one you should be focusing on is sitting in front of you."

For some reason that makes Jace laugh. I start to feel a bit embarrassed when he actually leans forward to bury his face in his hands in hopes to quiet the boisterous noise he's making. His shoulders are shaking from his chuckles that continue to grow until he's actually in tears. The sight warms my chest in ways I rather ignore.

"W-What's so funny?" I grumble, flushing a bit when our waiter comes by to take our order. He smiles at the both of us before asking if we need a minute. I quickly shake my head and tell him what I want while Jace has to take a moment in order to breathe again before he can answer.

The waiter is leaving when Jace finally says to me, "I don't know how you can be so honest, Mylo. It's a gift, seriously."

"Thanks?" I'm not sure if he's insulting or complimenting me.

"I like it."

My eyes go wide. He says I'm honest? What the hell is that then?

Jace smiles at my shock, leaning forward again so that his elbows are resting on the table. He sits his chin atop his folded hands while his eyes practically bore into my very soul. "Honesty is good, I hope you keep it up. Eres muy lindo."

I hold up my hand, pointing accusingly at him. "I swear if you're cursing at me."

Jace smiles and shakes his head.

"I'm remembering that and asking Olivia what it means."

" *If* you remember it, you mean."

I knew I should have had Olivia teach me Spanish. I'm going to have to start asking her for lessons if Jace is going to stick around. Wait, I'm saying that as if I honestly think he's going to stay with me, which he isn't.

Whatever, I still need to learn Spanish! It's not fair my best friend speaks it and so does my kind of, maybe, boyfriend! Thankfully he doesn't pull out the Spanish card the rest of the night. We eat our meal, have a good time, even if I don't want to admit it, then drive back to school where I retrieve my car once again.

Like last time, Jace doesn't leave until I'm in my vehicle. I roll my eyes at his actions but for some reason my stomach is feeling a bit warm. I must have eaten something funny at the restaurant.

I'm excited to return home and look at all the pictures I took. The moment I begin looking through them, I smile. There's so many happy faces that it

just makes me feel good. I'm definitely sending these to everyone and I have them on my computer in no time, searching through each one while determining which picture is for whom.

However, my searching is put on hold when I come across the last picture of the night. The moment I see it my cheeks burst into flames and my heart practically jumps out of my throat.

It's the photo Jace took of us.

Jace is smiling gleefully at the camera, his pearly whites showing off their natural sparkle. His eyes are wide and excited while his head is leaning against my own. He looks handsome as per usual while I...

My hair is pulled back, a few strands lingering before my eyes, which are glued on Jace. My cheeks are red while my lips are twitched back into this stupid smile. I'm definitely leaning into him and, well...I look like a fucking idiot. I need to delete this picture immediately!

Except I don't and I end up printing it out on the nicest photo paper I have. I don't do anything with it other than leave it on my desk but something tells me that I'm going to end up framing it.

~

Decided to update a day earlier. I wrecked my scooter Wednesday night and beat myself up pretty bad, had to take yesterday and today off because I am sore AF! So I want some happy in my life, which are your comments so here ya go! But aw cute pictures and even cuter dates, what do you guys think so far? Feelings seem to be developing for Mylo but what about Jace? Who is Jace texting? Is it even that important? Let me know what you think!

IMG 006

"How does it feel being a high school graduate?" Korey asks after we finish our photo shoot for the day.

I'm currently cleaning up the props, moving them over to the clear tub that we carry around with us for such occasions. The bride is gushing with her groom over their successful photo shoot. They're on their way back towards their reception, which we were happily told to stay and enjoy.

"I don't feel much different," I answer, pulling the tie out of my hair so that it can do its' own thing.

"What? When I graduated I felt like I was partying all summer...in reality I never left the couch."

I roll my eyes at that not so shocking statement. Korey isn't the type to party, never has been so I can see her enjoying her summer vacations sitting on the couch watching drama reruns on TV. Not that I'm saying that's a bad thing because, honestly, I would be doing the same. I shouldn't say would be because I've already kind of been doing that but, unlike Korey, I have a job...working for her.

"I can't party all summer. I have you to look after."

Korey gasps. "Look after? I am your boss, I am looking after you!"

"Says the one who forgot we had a photo shoot today."

"I'm a busy woman, sometimes I forget things!"

"Like how you forgot that wedding shoot last week or the graduation photos the time before that or-"

"I get it, I have a bad memory, shut up!" Korey childishly stomps her feet against the ground. She has on a pout that tells me she is on the verge of

firing me. Not really though because she would go crazy without me but, still, she doesn't seem pleased.

"Why are you so mean to me, Mylo?" She grumbles while we take everything back to the van.

"I'm just being honest."

"Your honesty can suck it."

Korey and I end up staying at the reception for some time, just for the free food honestly. Once we're done we head back to the office where Korey lets me head on home early. I thank her for it although I don't mind staying. I like my job and I like Korey so it doesn't feel like a pain to be there.

It's while I'm heading out to my car that I get a message. I hold up my phone to see that Jace has messaged me asking if I've gotten off work yet. I reply with a yes and nearly drop my phone at the lightning fast response he gives me.

Want to go bowling? Some friends wanted to meet up, thought you'd like to come along.

I stare at the request for a moment, sitting in my car with the door hanging wide open. I contemplate whether or not to say yes. I guess I don't see why I would say no. I have spent time with Jace's friends before although I'm not sure who all is coming along.

However, is he sure he wants me to hang out with them? Are they even aware that we're going out? They can't be. I don't think anyone is, hell, I'm not even fully sure we are.

Bowling does sound fun though. My plans were just to go home and nap. Ok, so napping sounds more appealing but...I agree to go along.

We're supposed to meet up in an hour so rather than heading home I hang out in town until it's time. Jace and I meet in the parking lot of the bowling alley at the designated time. He is smiling as per usual while I must be

wearing some sort of not so good expression because the moment Jace sees me he frowns.

"Something wrong?" He asks, which has me patting my face like somehow it will tell me what expression I'm making that has him asking that.

"No?"

Why did that sound like a question?

"You look troubled," he responds, shrugging his shoulders before suddenly pressing his hand to my forehead. I jump back, giving him a quizzical stare that he answers with a chuckle. "I was checking if you felt hot, thought maybe you were catching a summer cold."

"No, I'm fine."

Mentally I may not be but we don't need to discuss that.

"Whose all here anyways?" I ask in hopes to change the subject. Jace takes the bait.

"Ah, Daryl, Savannah, Mickey and Cierra."

Cierra?

Jace doesn't seem to find an issue with the girl coming along because he doesn't look bothered. In fact, he is tugging me towards the alley with a gleeful expression. I, on the other hand, find it odd that he's so willing to bring his (secret) boyfriend to hang out with one of his ex-girlfriends.

Ok, so it seems they didn't break up on bad terms. Also, we're in a group setting but, still, it's weird right? I sure as hell wouldn't take Jace around any of my ex-boyfriends even if I think he's pulling my leg. I shouldn't be an asshole about this though. If he wants me to get along with his friends then I'll do my best. I know Savannah and Mickey, I've spent time with them outside of school before but Daryl and Cierra are more of a " *I know a bit about them but nothing really* " so it'll be more difficult.

We get our shoes, find which bowling balls we want to use (the bright as fuck pink one is obviously mine) then join Jace's friends on one of the alley's.

"Hey Mylo, I thought I would never see you again after you graduated!" Mickey says upon seeing me.

"Yeah, I was hoping that would be the case but, sadly, life doesn't always go as planned, does it?"

Mickey dramatically throws his hand over his chest. "That hurt."

"Good, I hoped it would."

"I can't believe you're hanging around with Mylo," Savannah says, winking at me teasingly, which has me flipping her off. I'll have you know I am a blessing to be around. "Jace, you're too nice. He's going to taint you."

Jace looks back at me with a mocking grin while he plays along. "I already feel a little tainted."

"It's adorable how you guys are trying to tease me, like you think your opinions matter."

The group howls at my low blow, even Cierra lets out a giggle, which has me glaring at her for some reason. Ok, I need to chill so, before I shoot laser beams at her from my eyes, I turn away and take a seat by Jace's side at the table. Daryl has already put our names into the system so our game can begin.

I'm not that great at bowling or any type of physical activity so it's no surprise that when it's my turn I get three pins and nothing on my second try. I am actually shocked and find myself standing there in awe over the fact that my bowling ball didn't go straight into the gutter. Jace, on the other hand, seems to think I'm sad I didn't get more because he appears behind me.

"You'll do better next time," he says reassuringly then nearly chokes on his own laughter at my response.

"I sure as hell won't. The only physical activity I'm good at is sex so that was a bloody miracle!"

Jace's face goes completely red, his hand coming up to cover said face. I smile at the reaction, ready to lean over and tease him when Mickey appears behind us. It seems it's his turn and while, yeah, I'm not for that " *lets keep us a secret thing* " I don't want to out Jace without his permission either.

Quickly, I back off and return to the table with Jace while Mickey takes his turn.

It's pretty fun hanging out with everyone. I've never had an issue with large groups of people. In fact, I tend to thrive with more attention on me. Even if I don't hang out with them on a daily basis it's easy to make conversation. However, there is one thing that sort of irks me even if I don't want to admit it does.

Cierra giggles at Jace's joke yet again, her hand reaching across the table to playfully pat his arm before pulling away. Her lips haven't done anything but smile since he has arrived and she has this light dusting of pink beneath her eyes. Said eyes can't seem to get themselves off Jace either and that makes my teeth grind.

Someone needs a reminder that their dating status has expired.

Well, it's not like she knows Jace is taken. There's nothing wrong with having your eyes on someone when you don't know they're taken. See? This shit is why I hate the secret game because I can't play it. My inner bitch wants to jump across the table and whack her over the head a few times. (Is it really inner though?)

Not because I'm jealous but because I'm territorial, there's a difference! If Jace is pretending to date me then the man best not be cheating on me. Oh,

what the hell, I don't even make any sense at this point. I'm always contradicting myself. Why do I even bother?

My stomach growling tells me that perhaps I'm being more irritable than usual because I'm hungry. Getting something to eat doesn't sound like a bad idea. Sure, I stuffed my face at the reception but I am a growing boy. I'm hungry after thirty minutes so, yeah, it's time to eat.

"I'm getting a snack, want anything?" I ask Jace to which he requests I grab him a drink. Nodding, I get up to do exactly that when suddenly Cierra decides she'd like to tag along.

"Yeah, I'm hungry too!" She chirps, hopping out of her seat to follow me.

You fucking serious? This isn't going to end well...and it will likely be my fault but at least I am willing to admit to it.

Rolling my eyes, I walk away with Cierra right behind me. There are a few people in line at the snack bar so we end up having to wait side by side. Cierra doesn't seem to notice the tension between us because she's chattering away like there's no tomorrow. I remain mostly silent at her side until my curiosity eats away at me enough to force out a question that would be best if we avoided it but, fuck it, I don't make good decisions.

"You really ok with spending time around your ex?" I ask so bluntly that it shocks Cierra enough to physically jump.

She stares at me with wide eyes that continue to blink rapidly like she can't process the question. I'm sort of accustomed to the look, Olivia makes it quite a lot and she's been my best friend for an eternity. What can I say, I don't like to beat around the bush. It's easier to just get shit out of the way...hold the phone, I'm contradicting myself again. Whatever, I do what I want!

"Uh...you mean Jace?" Cierra inquires, glancing over her shoulder at the boy. It pisses me off how she smiles immediately before facing me. "Not really. We didn't have a bad break up or anything."

"Seems all the girls say that."

Cierra hums, giggling for a moment before actually continuing to speak, "Jace was a great boyfriend. He was sweet, understanding, considerate, like some sort of prince from a fairy tale."

Hearing that has me giving her a quizzical stare, she notices my confusion and seems to understand my unspoken question.

"But it felt like he did it out of obligation rather than love. I felt cared for but not loved, know what I mean?"

"No."

Because I don't know what it feels like to be loved either.

Shaking her head, Cierra brushes a few stray strands of hair behind her ear. She shrugs while she tries to explain, "It's hard to describe...but I'm not the only one who felt that way. Honestly, I think Jace is in love with someone else."

"What makes you say that?"

"There was someone he spoke to that always made him happy. I'm not sure why they aren't together or who it is but...he's definitely in love with them."

"You know, you were very open with basically a complete stranger," I point out, causing Cierra's eyes to grow wide yet again. Slowly, I start to smile while she does the same, the both of us chuckling softly to ourselves.

"Well, you asked and you're surprisingly easy to talk to," she admits moments before we arrive at the counter.

"Thanks."

The two of us get our food and drinks before returning to our game. Jace smiles the moment I take a seat next to him then has the audacity to try and steal from my cheese fries. I smack his hand away, the boy yelping at the

unexpected attack. My glare must be enough to scare him off because he doesn't try such a horrendous betrayal again.

Our evening continues with fun games and laughter. The night is over before I even realize it. It's growing late and we've played enough games so everyone decides to call it a night. I'm not all that surprised that Cierra requests a hug goodbye from Jace, which he happily gives. Does that bother me?

Fuck yeah it does, this piece of shit is about to get whacked and by piece of shit I mean Jace. Cierra isn't so bad and it's funny how quickly I changed my mind about it.

I don't bring it up though until after everyone has left. Jace and I are at my car since apparently he still has to open the door for me. Before he can do that, I step in front of him, lean against my vehicle and ask, "Having your secret boyfriend hang out with your ex-girlfriend, did you really think that through?"

Jace's eyes go wide from my sudden question. He tilts his head to the side while he asks, "Did...it bother you?"

"Which part? Her flirting with you the whole night, the hug, or both?"

"You know you kind of answered the question by saying that."

I roll my eyes. "Uh huh, ok playboy, I don't mind hanging out with your ex-girlfriends since it'll be impossible to avoid them all-"

"Are you implying that I'm a slut?"

"But next time I want a warning so I can mentally prepare myself."

Jace always seems to find humor in what I have to say because, yet again, he's looking at me in amusement.

"Sorry, I'll warn you next time but, you had fun, right? I'd feel awful if you hated the whole night."

Humming, I pretend to think it over, enjoying the slight panic that makes its way onto Jace's face. After a few moments of watching his panic I reply, "It was all right, would have been better if you weren't there."

"Wow, I didn't know you were so petty."

"Baby, *please* , I'm the definition of petty."

Jace's smile is practically lighting up the night and he needs to get that checked because I don't think it's normal. "I'll keep that in mind. Do you work tomorrow too?"

I nod, which seems to help end our evening completely. Jace tells me to get home safe, which has me scowling at him. I feel like a child when he says that but, whatever, I wave it off and jump into my car while Jace returns to his own.

Our evening ends with me still wondering how serious Jace is or not...and why I'm still bothering to put up with him.

~

Onto Ch. 6 and we still aren't entirely sure about Jace. What do you guys think? Cierra claims that Jace is in love with someone else, is he? Do you believe her? Should Mylo be worried or is Jace actually into him? Who knows!

IMG 007

"I am so proud. My baby is all grown up."

"Please stop treating me like your child."

"If you were my child you would have gotten Sonya to be your girlfriend far sooner than this."

I can *hear* Olivia's blush over the phone. "Mylo! C-Can't you just...ugh, you're so frustrating!"

"Keep talking dirty to me like that and I'm going to have to stick my hand in my pants."

Olivia groans and it's almost sad how it doesn't faze her so much anymore. She easily ignores my remark to go on and say, "I can't believe she liked me back. It's a miracle."

"Don't say that. You're a gem and Sonya obviously has great taste."

"This is the friend I prefer."

"Yeah, well, it's exhausting so that's all you're getting for the day. If you want him back I'll have to charge you for it."

Olivia giggles; the sound causes me to grin from ear to ear. I'm honestly very happy for her. I knew Sonya had a thing for her, ok, so maybe I was just hoping but still. The two are a cute couple and I know they're going to make each other very happy. If Sonya does anything to hurt my child I will have to fight her!

She'll kick my ass but I must keep my word and at least try.

"How are things with you and Jace?" Olivia questions because she has been trying to stay in the loop with me about it. She's obviously still worried and

I can't really help her with that because I sure as hell don't know what's going on.

"Same as usual. We text and hang out...there has been no hanky panky so that's a bummer."

"Are you ever going to talk with him about how you feel like you're being pranked?"

"No, I mean, at this point wouldn't he have broken up with me?"

It's been, like, two weeks. Surely he would be bored by now...then again, nothing has really happened between us. Maybe I should stick my hand down his pants the next time we meet up? If that doesn't shock him then, well, I'll have to try harder and I'm fine with that.

"I don't know, maybe he's just trying to get into your pants," Olivia suggests.

"You say that like it's a bad thing. His sweet ass can get into my pants immediately, actually, I'd prefer that."

"Mylo!"

I grin ear to ear. She should know her reactions only encourage me. "I am a growing boy. I need constant attention and sexual gratification, don't judge me."

If Olivia could strangle me right now she definitely would. She's grumbling something under her breath, which are probably curse words but there's no way I can tell. It makes me smile. Ah, being annoying is so much fun.

"Fine, I'm done talking about Jace, lets move onto your father."

"That is a horrible segue."

"Shut up, he's home, isn't he?"

I nod before I realize she can't see me. "Yeah, got home yesterday."

"How is that...going?" She sounds unsure how to ask and I can't really blame her.

It's not as if my dad and I have a bad relationship, more like we don't have much of a relationship to begin with. After mom found some other poor unfortunate soul to devour, she abandoned us and my dad became a single father that worked his ass off for me. Sadly, all that work resulted in him not really being around. I never complain because I'm so used to it that now when he is home we just kind of...coexist.

There are no fights because I certainly don't cause trouble. I get good grades and I'm even going to college. The apartment is always clean. I don't throw wild parties while he's away. I have a job where I make my own money to pay some of my own bills. My car is spotless so what is there for him to yell at me about? Dad simply returns home and enjoys his time off resting while I happen to be at the apartment. It's hard to explain yet very simple at the same time.

"We had dinner together last night so that was cool," I answer, thinking over how we basically sat in silence until we finished eating. About the only thing we discussed was my graduation. He said I did a good job and couldn't wait to hear about my college classes.

We both know we won't be talking about that but, whatever, it's what we're supposed to say, right?

"I still can't believe he didn't make it home for your graduation."

"Why is everyone so uptight about it?" I chuckle, glancing at my door when I happen to hear footsteps walk by. Dad passes by in a second, as if he'd come in to talk to me. "I know it's a big deal for some people but it isn't for me. It wouldn't have changed anything if he were there."

"That's the problem!" Olivia argues in an annoyed tone. "You shouldn't be used to him not being around and you should be bothered that he wasn't there. The fact that you don't see the problem is the problem."

"I'm...confused."

"I'm not shocked to hear it. God, Mylo, you need to look at this issue seriously and have a talk with your dad."

I groan. "You sound like my therapist."

"You probably need a therapist!"

I groan louder and louder until Olivia finally caves. She knows I hate talking about this serious shit, even more so when I don't see the reason why we're talking about it. Yet again, she is forced to drop the subject because we both know talking about it won't change anything or, rather, I'm not going to talk about it so we can't change anything. What can I say, I'm a stubborn jackass.

"Well, I need to get off of here. I told Sonya I'd call her after she got off work."

"Cute."

"I'll talk to you later."

With that, Olivia and I hang up, leaving me to do what I normally do on my days off. I'm out of bed in a second, tying my hair up before snatching my camera. After double-checking that I have everything, keys, wallet, phone, camera, so on and so forth, I head out of the apartment without bothering to tell my dad where I'm going. He doesn't ask either, simply waves to me when I walk by.

It has been an especially nice day, all sunshine without the nasty humidity so I can go out and enjoy taking some pictures. I've been in the mood to get some good portraits or people shots in general so I head on over to the park. Most people are taken aback when I request to take a few photographs but some are more than happy to do it.

There's the elderly couple that act like cute lovebirds, a child with their ice cream, a man walking his dog and a woman flying a kite. I get silly poses, friends laughing together or families enjoying their day out in the sun. Sometimes I sit on the edge of the small pond with my camera waiting for

any sort of movement that catches my eye. The sun hits the water just right and, if I wait long enough, I'll manage to catch a fish hovering just close enough to the top that I can catch it. I even manage to get a few shots of a turtle moving slowly out of the water. He's cute. I shall name him Greg!

However, my concentration is interrupted by my phone going off. Curious to who might be calling me, I sit up and pull it from my pocket to find Jace's name flashing across the screen. It's not unusual for him to be calling anymore. We're both off for summer with only our part time jobs to deal. He works at his grandfather's auto repair shop while I have my photography gig, so, on our days off we tend to hang out.

"Hello?" I answer, holding my phone between my ear and my shoulder while searching through the plethora of photo's I've managed to get today.

"Having fun at the park?"

"Yeah, actually-" Wait a second, how does he know that? I turn my head so fast my neck cracks. Wincing, I rub my neck while I look over the area to find that Jace is on the walk trail grinning at me playfully.

I scowl and press my phone back to my ear. "You're a fucking creep."

"Wha-"

I hang up before he can finish. My smile is pure evil when I watch Jace pout childishly like I hurt his feelings before eventually making his way over to me. There's a grocery bag in his hand telling me that he must have gone out to grab something.

"Shopping, are we?" I ask once he's in range.

"I just felt like getting out of the house then got hungry and went to get a snack. Want some?" Jace holds up the bag of mystery goodies. My stomach growls immediately even if I'm not that hungry, which has Jace laughing.

As if I would say no to free food. Snatching the bag from his grasp, I peer within to find a bag of hot fries along with a few other items that aren't of

much interest to me. I have the hot fries out and open before Jace can blink.

Upon realizing that I'm devouring his food, Jace laughs. "You like hot fries then?"

I'm too busy eating them to respond.

"What have you been up to?" Jace asks while we find a bench to eat our goodies on or rather his goodies that are now mine because he made the mistake of offering them to me.

I hold up my camera. "What do you think?"

"Without me? I'm hurt."

"Oh, what were you up to then?" Leaning over, I whisper teasingly into his ear. "I thought my loving boyfriend was meant to spoil me on his days off."

Jace shakes his head at me, smirking a bit as he does. A few girls walk by giving Jace a glance. I swear I see little hearts above their heads until I slam my hand on Jace's thigh and give it a good squeeze. The boy jumps while the girls gasp and walk off; giggling to one another.

"Mylo!" Jace hisses, looking to my hand that is rather close to a part of his anatomy that I am quite interested in.

"Jace!"

"What are you doing?"

"Sexually harassing you in public and refusing to apologize for it."

Jace doesn't push my hand away, which has me wondering if he's really ok with it. Maybe I inch up a little closer and, damn it, he pushes my hand away.

Pouting, I cross my arms while Jace says with an almost chuckling tone, "Stop it, we're in public."

"Implying I can continue when we're alone?"

"Is your mind always in the gutter?"

"Uh, yeah, I am a hormonal teenage boy."

"Not all men are obsessed with sex," Jace sighs.

I snap my fingers at him. "Accurate but, you see, I am."

Jace can't contain his laughter. He lets it out, shoulders shaking when he leans forward to bury his face in his hands. Seeing him like that kind of makes my body break out in goosebumps. My cheeks feel a little warm and I swear the sun got a little brighter. What is he, a fucking mutant? Who died and put me in the Marvel universe? If that's the case, Thor, where you at?

Before either of us can say another word though, Jace's phone goes off. Curious, I glance at the boy who looks to his pocket then retrieves said phone. Instantly, his eyes soften and he's off the bench, excusing himself without a second thought. My stomach knots together then kicks me in the chest when I watch Jace walk away to happily answer the call.

His voice is low and he's standing away from me so the conversation escapes me. However, that expression of his is clear as day. The conversation with Cierra returns to me. It seems what she said to be true.

Jace loves somebody and that somebody is likely who he's speaking with.

I roll my eyes, not that I care about that or anything.

When Jace returns from his phone call he apologizes and acts as if he wasn't a love struck puppy only moments ago. The boy must notice my annoyance because his hazel eyes widen with concern.

"Something wrong?" He asks like he doesn't know because he either actually doesn't or wants to pretend he doesn't. Either way, it pisses me off.

"No," I answer with such venom in my tone that it states what I really wanted to say.

"You're a bad liar."

"You'd be surprised."

Jace doesn't seem to know how to respond. He sits beside me with a furrowed brow like he's trying to decide what to say. I'm not going to throw him a bone either. He can figure it out himself. I'm not in the mood to play nice...wow, I need to see someone. My mood swings are insane.

To help my mood, I steal more of Jace's food. I've probably eaten half of it while he's busy trying to decipher the puzzle that is my mood swing. I don't think it's that difficult but maybe he is aware and doesn't wish to admit to who he was talking to or what it was about.

Watch it be like a family member or something and I'm being a piece of shit for no reason. Whatever, I'm always a piece of shit so it's not like there's a big difference.

"Are you mad that I didn't let you continue sexually harassing me in public?"

I choke on the pop Jace bought. Watching me cough up my lungs seems to amuse him because the boy laughs until I whack his arm. Oh, wait, nope, he's still laughing.

"No! And how is that harrassment? You're my-" I stop myself before I can finish considering I'm shouting so everyone will hear rather than only us. Jace gets the picture.

"True." Jace throws an arm behind me, using the hold to pull me into his side.

Feeling my shoulder brush against him, feeling the warmth seeping in through my clothes during the hot summer day makes my skin catch fire. My heart seems to take that as a sign to freak the fuck out. It's throwing a rave in my chest without my permission. Stop that, you little shit!

"You certainly don't have an issue admitting that either."

"Why? Does it bother you?" I tease.

"No," he grins like he just won a million bucks. "I kind of like it."

And that is when my heart decides that it's perfectly ok not to beat properly. Damn, I'm in trouble.

~

May we be blessed with cute Mylo and Jace interactions. I know these chapters are shorter than my usual but, I don't know, it works for them. Everyone seems to be believing Cierra that Jace is in love with someone else. Is he? If so, why is he dating Mylo? How are things going to play out? WHO KNOWS! (Me. I know it all and no, I will not tell)

IMG 008

"Why me?"

"Because."

"Because why?" Jace flushes when I snap yet another picture of him making the collection come up to over a dozen. I grin and stare down at the shot, finding that the lighting is just perfect. He is annoyingly attractive. I should be proud but probably won't feel that way until I've at least gotten a kiss.

"I wanted to take some portraits today and you're here so why not? Now stop complaining!" I hiss, grabbing Jace to drag him to another location in the park that I have deemed photo worthy.

He is a little hesitant to do as I ask. He stands awkwardly, sits awkwardly and smiles awkwardly, which has me laughing. I continuously have to remind him that it's all in good fun and that he looks really good, insanely good, so much so that I want to punch him for it. At the same time, I'm a little proud. I need to work harder so I can get in his pants.

"Don't you have other people to model for you?" Jace groans after I ask him to try striking a pose other than the tense one he's been giving me.

"Nope."

"You probably haven't even asked anyone!"

"I don't need to when I have you." I hop on over to fix Jace's hair since the wind is blowing it all around. His eyes shut while I ruffle the locks atop his head until I get them to, kind of, do as I wish.

Grinning, I realize this is another good time to test him. "Why don't we take a few shots of you with your shirt off?"

Jace's eyes grow wide.

"I need some new masturbation material."

Jace playfully pushes me back. "No way."

"Fine, I can make do with these." I wave my camera through the air causing Jace to once again bury his face in his hands. It's pretty damn cute and I hate myself for admitting it. "When we're alone then, I'll gets some of those nude photos."

"Never! What if they get leaked on the internet?"

"Like I would let that happen. I'm the jealous type, remember?" I send Jace a wink while he looks ready to drop dead from embarrassment. Yet he still laughs and continues my make shift photo shoot.

I don't know how long we're out taking photos, long enough for the sun to start to set. It's fun. After a while, Jace gets used to it and looks a little more comfortable but he still has trouble looking at the camera. I guess it is harder to be the one in the photo rather than the one taking it. I should know, I hate having my picture taken yet I love taking them.

Jace's phone goes off again, this time he takes it while it front of me, happily chirping, "Abuela!"

And Grandma is all I get out of their conversation because I don't understand the rest. Once they're off the phone Jace tells me he needs to head on home. Dinner is about done and part of me expects him to ask me to tag along but he doesn't. Maybe that hurt a bit but at the same time I doubt he wants to introduce "his boyfriend" to his grandparents.

"I've got work tomorrow but I'll text you, ok?" Jace says, waving goodbye while heading off in the direction of his home. I give a half-assed wave back before returning to my own car, sitting in the driver's side with a feeling of confusion.

Am I still bothered by Jace possibly messing with me? I guess, in a way, sort of? I suppose it's my distaste of not having the upper hand. I don't like being left in the dark or something like that. But so much time has passed that there's no way this is a joke, if it is, then Jace is hella determined. Maybe I'm over thinking things again...probably.

Sighing, I head home while contemplating what my next move should be. It seems Olivia is having an affect because I'm starting to think I need to bring it up. Just be honest with Jace, it won't be hard considering my honesty often comes out even during times when it shouldn't. Next time we hang out I'll ask him why he agreed to date and if he's taking this seriously. If I don't like his answer, we'll end it, never see each other again and go our separate ways, problem solved. It will be quick and easy.

Upon arriving home I find my dad in the living room passed out on the couch. His mouth is wide open emitting snores that echo through the apartment. Shaking my head, I walk over and turn off the TV before grabbing an extra blanket off the back of the arm chair. After tossing it over my dad, I silently go to my room. There I end up watching some movies while texting Olivia into the later hours of the evening when Jace finally messages me.

What are you doing?

I grin before texting back without second thought, *Jerking off to those pictures I took of you earlier.*

I half expect to either be ignored or told to fuck off but I end up snorting at his response , *I'm your boyfriend, it should only be my pictures you jerk off to.* Before I can reply he sends a second text, *But seriously I'm not sending you nudes.*

M: You're no fun.

J: No, I'm paranoid, there's a difference.

I'm a bit surprised at his quick responses.

M: Why are you still texting me? I'm kind of busy.

J: Thought it might help. Should I call instead?

This bitch thinks I won't call him while jerking off? I feel like he's challenging me. Maybe I really should...but my dad is home and that shit makes me anxious. Ok, I'll just go with messing with him.

Snickering, I end up hitting the call button, grinning mischievously when it rings four times before Jace answers with a *very* hesitant tone, "Are you seriously jerking off right now?"

"I don't know, what do you think?"

"You're pulling my leg."

"I could pull something else if you'd like."

Jace laughs, the sound warming my cheeks enough to tell me that I'm probably blushing. Good thing no one is around or I would have to come up with an excuse.

"You're one of a kind, Mylo."

"Believe me, baby, I know."

Jace falls silent for a moment making me wonder if using "baby" made him uncomfortable. We were just talking about masturbating a second ago so that certainly couldn't have bothered him, could it? If it did then he's weirder than me!

"Do you need to leave?" I ask in hopes to break the silence between us. "It's getting late, you have to work tomorrow."

"Not until noon so I'm ok. Why? Are you actually busy?"

"Nah, I'm seriously not doing anything." I lean back into the pillows I have propped against the headboard. The TV is on but I've already turned it down in order to hear Jace.

While I'm picking at the stray string hanging from my shirt I get the sudden urge to interrogate Jace. There's no use beating around the bush anymore, right? This game of his has gone on too long so, with that thought in mind, I ask, "Why are we going out?"

"Perdón?"

"Like, do you even have a thing for me? Last I checked you were straight." Of course he could be in the closet but I'm just trying to get some information here. "And we weren't exactly chummy before all this. I thought you were messing with me-"

"Ouch."

"-but by now I figured if you were, something would have happened. I don't know, asked for a dick pic and spread it around the school, not that I would have been ashamed but still."

Jace seems to be stuck somewhere between concerned and amused. "Your ego kills me."

"I'm simply curious if this whole dating thing is serious or if you're pulling me off because, if you are, then it best be in the literal sense at some point or I'm gonna get pissed off."

Jace snorts, probably at my inability to take the situation seriously although I brought it up. Hey, I'm known for that. Serious isn't exactly my go to.

I'm not sure what kind of response I expect but it's not this.

"Why did you want to date me?" Jace asks without hesitation. I thought maybe I cornered him but it seems Jace either has no ulterior motives or is a really good actor. "Like you said, we weren't chummy before. I also know that you have dated but never seemed to take it seriously."

Accurate, can't deny that.

"A lot of people, actually, most people date without even really knowing each other because the point is to hopefully find romantic feelings that have

always been there or will eventually be there. When you asked, I figured you just wanted in my pants-"

"You know me too well already."

Jace doesn't seem bothered by my humor, chuckling once before continuing, "There was no reason to say no. I never dated a guy but it's not like I haven't been interested and, honestly, I've enjoyed myself the last two weeks. What about you?"

So I am the possible experimental boyfriend? I suppose I had one of those too then realized, yeah, guys are all I go for. It's not as if it bothers me, it is more relieving than I want to admit actually.

I rip the stray string off my shirt, scowling at how the threading is messed up now because of me. Twisting the string around my finger, I reply, "I suppose it hasn't been awful."

"You're so hard to please."

"I'm really not, just send me nudes."

Jace sighs and I can envision him rubbing his temple. Grinning, I listen to his voice that so easily shows that he does find amusement in my jokes, "Lets hang out Wednesday, we can do whatever you want."

"Sex-"

"Other than that."

Well, I tried.

"Fine, I'll tell you whatever I feel like doing on Wednesday."

"Ok, buenas noches."

"Goodnight." I smile, hanging up the phone afterwards while feeling sort of better. It seems Jace isn't messing with me, which is great but at the same time I feel that there's more to this.

I think about what Cierra told me the night at the bowling alley. She thinks Jace is already in love with someone but the question is who? And why the hell aren't they dating?

Jace is one fine piece of ass so whoever they are, they're fucking crazy. Once I get in his pants I'm never letting him leave the bedroom...unless we plan on getting freaky together some place else in which I will have to consider it. No public places because I'm not ok with someone catching a glimpse.

I snicker at my own ridiculous thoughts, reaching for the remote to turn the volume back up. Just as I do there's a knock at the door. Down the volume goes once again after I shout for my dad to come on in. When he peeks his head in I offer him up a smile that he returns.

"Hey, I've got another trip coming up in about a week."

Not surprising although normally they at least give him a month between them.

"If you need anything before then let me know. If not, you know you can use my card."

"I'm fine, dad."

I can handle myself, always have and always will.

With that, dad wishes me a goodnight, which I return, then exits my room. Once gone, I turn the volume back up, grumbling a bit to myself about his constant absence. He could stick around for at least a month. Maybe we could go see a movie or something but I never bother to bring thoughts like that up. He's pretty busy and when he is home he's normally just resting. I don't want to bother him so, whatever, it's fine. I don't care about it.

Sighing, I return to watching TV, falling asleep shortly after with no idea what I plan to do with Jace on Wednesday.

~

Jace really did just agree to go out because, basically, he thought Mylo wasn't all that serious either. However, do you think they're getting serious now or at least will be in the future? What do you think of the relationship between Mylo and his dad?

IMG 009

"That's good, right?" Sonya asks, her brow raised in a sort of confused curiosity, after I've brought them up to to date on the deal between Jace and me.

Beside her Olivia is drinking happily from her pop. Their hands are intertwined on the table while I'm sitting across from them with a scowl. Neither of them bat an eyelash when I reach across and slap their hands apart. Sonya giggles while Olivia rolls her eyes.

What can I say? Cute shit makes me sick.

"I suppose," I respond with a shrug. "I mean, he isn't messing with me, so it seems, but there's more to this I know it."

"Like what?" Olivia asks before letting out a loud burp. Sonya makes a "nice" comment to which I agree with.

"I don't know. Listen, he talks with someone on the phone, texts them while we're out and I know he has a thing for them because he's...a different person. Looking at him makes me ill."

"Jealous, you mean?" Olivia grins at the glare I send her. The bitch thinks I won't attack her in public? Cause challenge accepted.

Sonya snaps her fingers before the two of us, turning our gazes back to her. Olivia returns to all love struck while I try my best not to hurl.

"If he likes this person, why aren't they going out then? It's not like Jace lacks experience in the dating department," Sonya practically voices my own thoughts.

I shrug while leaning back into my chair. My food has been finished but my stomach is still growling. Olivia's fries look tempting so I steal them to which she shouts at me for but it's too late. They are in my stomach. We're

in a food court anyways, she can get more! Technically so could I but that's not the point.

"Maybe they're with someone else and he hasn't gotten over them? Oh, what if they're older...and married?!" Olivia slams her hands against the table, eyes wide while looking at me for a reaction, which I happily give.

"You read too many shitty romance books."

"You're shitty!"

"Takes a shitty person to know a shitty person."

Sonya smiles at our banter, watching on with fascination. She doesn't even seem bothered with us, which is good because we're always like this. If she wants to keep dating Olivia, she better get used to our arguments because they are frequent.

"Ok, maybe it's true that he can't date this person for some dumb reason. However, I don't want to be some side hoe that's nothing more than a replacement. Is he not aware of how great it is to date someone like me? I'm the best catch there is!" I point to myself for emphasis, which only results with Olivia howling with laughter while Sonya pinches the bridge of her nose.

" *Oi* , it's true!" I hiss, kicking Olivia beneath the table but she has gotten into snorting territory. "Seriously, I'm a great boyfriend."

Olivia is actually wheezing. Well, fuck her too.

"Sonya, did I tell you about the time Olivia ate dog food?"

Sonya's interest is piqued at that, her nose twisting back in disgust while Olivia comes down from her high. She glares at me, cheeks starting to tint with red.

"Mylo!" She calls, trying to kick me beneath the table but her wee little legs can't reach me. I am grinning like the Cheshire cat while she struggles.

"Wasn't that long ago either so think about it the next time you two make out."

Sonya gags.

Yep, I have successfully ruined their relationship. Score!

"Ok, lets get back on topic," Sonya says, seeming to not want to discuss her girlfriend's stinky breath. "Why don't you ask him about it?"

Is this bitch crazy?

"What?" I inquire, narrowing my gaze at the girl who smiles sheepishly at me. "Why would he tell me the truth since no matter what it is I'll probably be pissed off?"

"But what if it's not something you think it to be?" Olivia points out, beginning to bend her straw back and forth. "Maybe it's a family member or someone he cares about but not necessarily romantically."

"You need to see his face," I explain, recalling the warm expression he has worn before. It's something I've never seen him have with me or anyone else for that matter. This is no family member. It's definitely someone he is interested in, romantically.

"If it really bothers you, your only option is to bring it up. You won't know the answer if you don't," Sonya says with a slight shrug.

But that is where she is wrong. There's sneaking. The real question is how to steal Jace's phone, the proof. (This is called sarcasm!)

When Wednesday comes around, I haven't the foggiest but it lingers in the back of my mind.

"So, what do you want to do?" Jace asks over the phone while I'm basically doing the worm on my bed in an attempt to pull on my jeans.

"I told you what I wanted already but you said no."

"We're not having sex in a movie theater."

"But, babe, why?"

"Do you want to see a movie?" Jace snickers, which has my lips twitching back into a smile.

"Not really." I try to think over what else we could do that doesn't involve public nudity. "We could have sex at my place?"

"Mylo."

"You'll be screaming that later."

"Mylo, *please* ."

"That too."

"Text me your address-"

"Holy fuck, are we really?" I gasp, sitting up so fast it gives me whiplash and I fall right back into bed.

"No, I'm picking you up and taking you where ever I want to go since you refuse to give me a serious response."

I roll my eyes. "Well, I mean, I did, but you said no."

"Address." His voice is anything but annoyed though, which informs me that he enjoys my constant need to tease. One of these days he'll say yes and he won't regret it, I promise.

Finally, I give out my address and, while waiting for Jace's arrival, go about cleaning the apartment. My dad offered once when I was younger to hire a maid but I refused to accept. I don't know if it's because I want to feel like I'm doing my part but I've always been the one to clean ever since mom left. Even when the house is spotless I find myself doing something.

I'm sweeping away like Snow White when my phone suddenly goes off. It's a message from Jace that reads, *did you really give me the right address?*

Yes, why? You lost? I reply.

Not a second passes before he responds, *there is no way you live in these apartments.*

I chuckle, not at all surprised to read it. I tell him to head on up and find out so, minutes later when the doorbell rings, I know exactly who it is. After putting the broom away, I hop on over to the door and open it to find Jace on the other side with a perplexed but also fascinated expression.

"I honestly thought you lied to me about your address," Jace whispers like he thinks his voice will upset the furniture.

He quietly steps into the apartment, kicking off his shoes while eying the entryway. His gaze falls upon the few pictures mounted on the walls of my father and me before taking in the living room a few steps in.

"What? Someone like me can't have a nice place?" I tease, shutting the door behind him while pressing my palm into his back to push him forward since he refuses to do so on his own.

Yes, I was tempted to tap his ass first but I am a gentleman and would never do such a thing...until I know I can get away with it.

Jace literally tip toes into the living room, standing on the carpet with tension in his shoulders. The reaction isn't uncommon since most people see me as a typical run of the mill teenager from a middle class family and while, at one point, that was true it isn't anymore. My dad makes good money and takes care of us.

"What do your parents do?" Jace inquires, appearing to be investigating the apartment now that he realizes it won't come to life and devour him for defiling the land. He's currently holding up a picture of me as a baby, smiling from ear to ear.

"My dad is some fancy-shmancy architect that's rarely home," I answer with a shrug, which has Jace's smile falling while he faces me. "And my mom isn't around."

"Oh."

Jace sits the picture aside, the tension returning to his shoulders. I guess I could have answered that better but it's best to get the awkward conversations out of the way. Family is not something I enjoy discussing, it always ruins the mood.

"So, are we fucking or leaving?"

And Jace's tension disappears when he faces me with a very " *I'm so done with you* " expression. I blow him a kiss that he actually dodges making me gasp in fake offense.

"How dare."

"You forgot a word-"

"No I didn't, just, *how dare* ."

Jace shakes his head before walking over to me. Now it's his turn to push me along, his hands on my shoulders first to spin me around then walks us both to the door. He's kicking his shoes on while I'm doing the same.

After walking out the door I ask, "Where are we going?"

"You'll see," Jace says with a wink that he is not allowed to do to anyone else or I will be forced to murder them.

"Don't wink at other people."

Jace crinkles his nose in confusion. It's adorable and I think I shouldn't let him do that in front of others either.

"Why?" Jace sounds very hesitant about asking.

"I will have to kill them for witnessing such a thing. It's mine now."

"My wink?"

"Yes."

Jace and I step into the elevator, the boy seeming to take a moment to actually consider my request. It isn't actually a request but we can let him think it is. After a second, he laughs softly, looking at me with a gaze I can't quite explain.

"You baffle me, Mylo."

I think that's a compliment. Either way, I'm going to ruin the moment.

"Thanks, but you know, I have something else that can baffle you."

Jace doesn't respond verbally, just shakes his head and walks out the elevator doors when they open. Rude, that was funny and he should have laughed.

"Why aren't you laughing?" I call after him, smiling while I catch up to him. Without much thought, my hand reaches out to take his and the moment it's in my grasp I come to a complete halt. Jace does too, stopping in order to look down at the connection of our hands. Unlike me though, who is wide-eyed, Jace appears calm.

"Something wrong?" Jace questions while intertwining our fingers like it's natural. I guess it is to him, he's dated more than me but they've always been girls so...

"You're uh..." I look about the lobby of the apartment building. The only person here resides at the front desk and she's not paying any attention to us. "You're ok...with this?"

I point to our hands. Speaking of hands, mine is starting to shake and he has to notice it. Jace mentions nothing of it though.

"Yeah, why wouldn't I be?" Jace gives a slight tug towards the exit. My feet are kind of cemented in place so I don't move, which makes him chuckle. "What? Is holding hands too innocent for you?"

"I'd rather be holding dicks to be honest-"

"Does your mouth run off whatever comes to your head?"

"Yes."

Jace bites his bottom lip to hold back a smile but I can still see it clear as day. His hazel eyes sparkle for a moment before he shakes his head and tugs once more insisting that I follow. My legs are slowly turning to jello so they easily start to move once Jace does and we're at his car in no time. My heart decides to race faster than usual and I have to remind my body that holding hands is not that big of a deal. It needs to calm its' shit because I cannot act all love struck right now. I'm going to look ridiculous!

The car ride is surprisingly short. We find ourselves before Jace's date destination that has me both confused and excited.

"You know, when I imagined us getting hot and sweaty together it involved more nudity."

Jace bites his lip and closes his eyes while letting out a long sigh that has me snickering.

"Sorry to disappoint you." Jace doesn't sound apologetic and his eyes certainly aren't sorry when he looks at me. "Do you not like rock climbing?"

I shrug while opening the car door to step out. Before shutting said door, I lean down to reply with a teasing grin, "I enjoy rough activities."

Jace gapes. "Do you ever-"

I shut the door and quickly make my way to the entrance. Jace is right behind, his hand coming out to yank on the back of my hair childishly. I

yelp but don't complain since he's paying for us. I'm not all that surprised that he picked a more physical activity, although I had a better one in mind.

Jace is the active type, always has been. While I'm not as eager as him, I certainly enjoy a good adventure or trying something new. Rock climbing isn't new for me but I haven't done it in a while so it actually sounds pretty fun.

Lets make it a bit more fun though.

"How about a race on the last climb of the day?"

Jace perks at the mention of it, eying me with curiosity after the two of us got our gear on and are ready to try out the first wall.

"That confident, are you?" There's a spark of competition in his eyes.

"I like a challenge every now and again. If I win-"

Jace interrupts, "I swear if it's sex related."

"A kiss."

I look to Jace with a serious expression that he quickly mirrors. A silence falls between us that makes me wonder if he realizes why I'm asking for that. How long have we been "dating?" Three weeks or some shit and we have yet to kiss, which is weird. There should have been some kind of action going on but all we've done is hold hands, once, *on accident!*

If Jace really is bisexual then he's never going to figure out the truth if he doesn't go for it and, well, I'll find out if he's actually interested. So, with a nod, I ask again, "If I win, I want a kiss."

Jace looks about ready to nod but the tension is killing me so I decide to break it.

"Not some pansy, peck on the lips style. I mean full on making out, swapping of saliva, moaning like a very satisfied hooker afterwards type of kiss."

And the moment is ruined. I try my best! Jace is hiding his face with his hands, shoulders shaking from his laughter before he drops his arms to the side. With a wave of his hand he says, "You have very high expectations of me. What if I'm a bad kisser?"

"Then we're breaking up. *Immediately* ."

"Wow."

"I have needs, babe."

I'm almost proud how Jace reacts after my teasing. He just goes with it at this point. I've trained him well so, with a nod, Jace agrees to the race.

~

I don't care what anyone says. I love my boys. They are precious and just alsdkjfsldkj I haven't had this much fun writing in so long. I JUST LOVE THEM! How about that accidental hand holding and Mylo's race idea? Who will win and will our boys finally have their first kiss? But the real question is...IS JACE A BAD KISSER? TUNE IN NEXT TIME ON MYLO, THE OVERLY HORMONAL TEENAGE BOY AND JACE, THE POOR SAP THAT HAS TO PUT UP WITH HIM!

IMG 010

Witty banter and teasing ensues immediately while the two of us try to see who is the best climber. It's pretty obvious that it's Jace but I give it my best shot.

"I'm surprised you can pull yourself up with those chicken arms," Jace comments when we're back on the ground. I'm too busy chugging water to respond until he slaps said chicken arms.

I give him a glare then whack him over the head with my water bottle. "These chicken arms will fight you."

"I'm terrified, truly."

Just because his shoulders expand over the horizon doesn't mean he's all tough! I can take him on...in bed anyways.

I'm about to comment that and Jace must know me too well at this point because he quickly starts ushering me to the last course of our day. We're both hungry at this point and ready to get a late lunch or early dinner depending on how you wish to phrase it.

"First to the top wins!" I announce like Jace doesn't know that already. Still, he nods and on the count of three, we begin the climb.

I'm way more determined this time around than the others and it shows. Even Jace seems shocked to find me moving up the wall with a speed that is managing to keep up with his own. From the corner of my eye I catch his smirk that never leaves his face the higher we move up—

Until I slip and fall right off, the bungee cord catching me before I swing towards the wall and barely stop myself from ramming into it with my feet.

"You ok?" Jace calls, looking at me with wide eyes.

"Fine," I sigh, noticing that Jace is basically at the top. Even if I try to start back up all he has to do is take two more steps to win. "Looks like you won."

Jace nods but doesn't bother taking the last few steps. Am I annoyed with the outcome? Definitely, because now I'm not going to get a kiss and that irks me. I could always just jump him and see how it goes? But the idea of doing something that would possibly annoy or hurt his feelings makes my chest ache in ways that I rather not think about; let alone feel.

With a heavy sigh, I accept that this day won't end the way I want it to but...it's not like I didn't have fun. The last few dates I have been on always ended early since it was clear neither of us were interested in the actual date. It's nice to go out for a day with someone you generally enjoy talking to and just have a good time.

When Jace is at my side he asks again, "You sure you're ok?"

I flush a bit when he presses his hand to my cheek. Gently, he pushes my head from side to side while inspecting for any possible damage. Physically, there is none. Mentally, I am beaten beyond belief. Something is broken, pretty sure it's my heart since it can't remember how to beat properly.

"Yeah, I'm fine...you know I wasn't even close to hitting my head?" I tease, smirking at the pursed his lips he gives me in return.

"Am I not allowed to worry?"

"Hakuna Matata."

Jace ruffles my hair, the action sends a jolt down my spine that has my toes curling. When he's done, I'm too busy mentally panicking to notice him walking away. My whole body is breaking out with goosebumps because he ruffled my hair? Seriously? Can you not body? I'd rather get a boner, thanks, that's actually easier to deal with.

"Mylo, are you coming?" Jace calls, patiently waiting for me at the counter to check us both out. With a quick nod, I take off all the shit they had to put

on us and follow after him while trying to stop the blush. Doesn't seem to be working though.

Next on the agenda is to grab some food and I decide to pay since I haven't really been paying. Jace is shocked when I offer so I reach across the booth to slap him for it. While the day remains a good one, I still feel a little down with the outcome of our "race." At some point we're going to have to move forward or else I'm going to be stuck dating a guy that I'm not even sure is bisexual or not.

Even if I ask and he says "yeah" then why haven't we done anything? Come on, we're both hormonal teenage boys. We're curious, we're young, got all that vigor going on y'know, sex tends to happen quickly. Not to say that it always should but some type of move should have been made by this point and it worries me that it hasn't.

I want to be "the nice guy" who doesn't ask too many personal questions. Sure, I can be blunt but I don't always want to be, get it? I know how it feels to be in the closet. I know how scary it can be to take that step to come out. If there's one thing I don't want to push someone to do, it's to come out. Sometimes it's hard for me not to just blurt shit out of my wit like I usually do and it's making this all the more difficult.

To make this situation worse, the ever so mysterious caller returns to further slam the issue into my face.

Jace's phone goes off, the screen lighting up across the table. I'm a bit peeved that I can't make out more than a "M" in their name before Jace excuses himself. I give him a nod, watching the boy step out of the booth to head towards the exit. He's chattering away before he disappears out the door, leaving me pissed off at our booth.

Who is it? What does she want? And why does Jace look so lovestruck every time she calls? Hey, she could be a he or they, maybe that explains why Jace isn't dating them? I shake my head, trying desperately to drop it. Obviously no such thing happens and Jace returns about five minutes later, hesitantly taking his seat because he must sense my displeasure.

"Sorry about that," Jace says quietly, taking a sip of his drink while keeping his eyes off me.

"Uh huh...who was that?" I ask, leaning on the table while smiling but I promise it isn't a pleasant sight. "They call a lot."

Jace sits his drink aside, our food arriving just in time to give him a moment to breathe. However, once our waitress is gone I'm looking back at Jace, expecting an answer.

"It was my abuela."

He's lying. Even with my "cut the bullshit" expression, Jace doesn't falter. He remains placid, looking at me with eyes that are refusing to show the truth. Not that I expected them to so, with a heavy sigh, I lean back and huff, "Whatever."

Our dinner is mostly silent thanks to me. While Jace tries to make small talk I blow him off with one word answers or acts of avoidance. I can see his brow furrowing like he wishes to say something but never does. Dare I say it, he actually looks a little annoyed with me, which is odd. I've never seen Jace annoyed and while the sight is unpleasant it also makes me a bit happy to see. Now he knows how it feels.

I know I'm a jerk but, if the shit head is lying to me then he can't expect me to be all smiles and sunshine. If he has something to say then he better speak up and say it...I should take my own advice and just force the truth out of him.

Dinner ends, or lunch, whatever it is, and the two of us make our way back to his car. It's not late enough to head home but after that awkward exchange I can't imagine we'd stay out. However, I'm proven wrong when Jace doesn't turn in the direction to take me home but rather the opposite.

"Uh, I live that way," I point out, gesturing behind us since maybe he doesn't remember where I live?

When Jace shakes his head I realize that he remembers and is intentionally taking the wrong direction. Glancing at me out of the corner of his eye before returning his vision the road, Jace says, "I'm not taking you home when you're mad."

"Oh?" I hum, leaning back into the seat with my arms crossed. "Hoping to spend some money on me so I'll forgive you?"

"Not really."

"Sex?"

"No."

"I'm going to remain angry then."

Jace rolls his eyes, silence following afterwards that remains until the two of us arrive at the park. I raise a curious brow then look over to Jace in confusion only to find him stepping out of the car. Still confused, I get out as well, finding the trunk open and Jace rummaging through it.

Before I can even ask what he's doing, Jace walks around the car and takes a picture of me. The flash makes me jump, not expecting it at all while Jace snickers at my reaction and looks at the screen of his camera to inspect the photo.

"Nice face," he says, holding it up to show the wide-eyed and dumb expression he got of me.

"Delete that," I order, holding out my hand for the camera that he refuses to give. Instead, he holds it up and takes another picture of my annoyed scowl.

"This is a nice face too."

"Delete them both or I will castrate you."

"Before we have sex? I doubt you would do such a thing." Jace grins mischievously, the sight of it makes my chest warm and, no, it's not in

anger. My anger is actually diminishing bit by bit even if I'm still pretending to be pissed off.

"Seriously, give me the camera," I demand, stepping towards the boy that is circling around his car with said camera raised. He's still taking pictures of me and for some reason that makes my heart race. "Jace, stop!"

"I promise you won't actually want me to."

Did he just...?

I glare at the boy before hissing, "Do not steal my sexual innuendos. That is my gig."

Jace only chuckles and snaps yet another picture. The soft sound of the shutter makes me growl before running at him. Jace doesn't seem to expect it but he's quick to react, barely dodging me to bolt into the park with me right behind him. Any chance he gets Jace takes a picture. When he tries to hide behind a tree or ducks under some branches, when a couple walks past and I'm left smiling sheepishly after nearly running into them or when I have finally reached my exhaustion limit for the day.

While Jace is also breathing heavily, he isn't nearly as bad as me. Seeing that I am no longer a threat, Jace makes his way over, seeming to look through his pictures with joy. I'm leaning against a tree trying to regain my breath. My hair is all frizzy from the hot weather and a few strands are stuck to the side of my face.

We're silent afterwards, the two of us simply standing near one another beneath the shade of the tree. A cool breeze blows by, successfully cooling me down so my skin is no longer warm. I'm not sweating nor do I stink, thank god for functioning deodorant. It takes a few minutes for me to finally think up something to say though.

"You better delete all of this," I end up saying with what I hope to be intimidation but it doesn't work. I'm breathless and tired.

"No way," Jace practically sings, holding up his camera for me to see the ridiculous pictures he's gotten. "These are gold."

"I swear I'll—"

"What?" Jace steps forward, so close that my personal bubble has been more than broken. It has been completely demolished with Jace being so close that I can feel heat radiating off his skin and it's definitely not from the running we did earlier.

With his hazel eyes falling half mast, Jace whispers in a voice that he has to know is seductive or by God he is the most naturally sexually frustrating person I've ever met, "What will you do, Mylo?"

It seems my humor has decided to take the back seat for this and enjoy the ride because I can't come up with a response. Instead, I'm left standing before Jace in basically a predator vs. prey scenario and while, yes, I would be fine if he ate me I am only ok with it in the sexual sense. Why can't I say that? Come on, say something witty, don't just stand here like a doe in—

My thoughts are put on hold when Jace does the unthinkable. Without any warning, he leans in to press his lips to mine in an unexpected kiss.

The shock is so intense that I can't even respond other than kiss back even if I am meant to still be mad at him. What can I say, I have priorities and apparently my priority is kissing Jace above all else. Feeling his lips against mine, the soft pressure that's so innocent yet my stomach is knotting in ways that I can't describe, it's making me realize how much trouble I'm actually in.

When Jace pulls away the first thing I see is a smile, soft and warm in a way I haven't seen before. There are no words and I kinda hate myself for admitting it.

"What was that for?" I ask, growing annoyed with the breathiness of my voice.

"I won the race," Jace says like that is meant to make sense. My confusion is evident because he chuckles. "I never said what I wanted if I won."

"And...you wanted to kiss me in public?" I tease, grinning at the wide eyes he suddenly makes. "If I knew that was what got your engine going I would have tried it sooner."

"That's not—" Jace rubs his temple but I know he doesn't have a headache purely based on the adorable way he's biting his lip. "You ruined the moment, Mylo."

I shrug, trying to play it cool although I know my cheeks new favorite color is making it impossible. "It's what I'm best at."

Jace shakes his head while looking to his camera once more. Curious, I try to peer at the screen but he turns away from me with a grin. Before I can comment though, Jace holds it out to allow a better look at the shot he managed to sneak.

"I think I'll frame this," he says while my mind basically implodes at the picture he managed to get of our first kiss. It's a little blurry, the lighting isn't the greatest yet I can't help but feel this is the best picture I've ever seen.

This fucker. He is literal cheese. I can't deal.

Jace pulls the camera away before I can attempt to delete the evidence. There's a sort of proud smirk etched on his face that makes me bite the inside of my mouth to keep my own smile at bay.

"I'm going to give you a copy too."

"I'll burn it."

Jace gasps. "Why? It's a cute picture."

"I don't do cute."

Jace cocks a disbelieving brow then says confidently, "Eres muy lindo."

Shit, I forgot to look up what that meant. Pouting, I try to ask what it means but Jace refuses to tell me. What the hell? He can so easily change the topic of conversation by speaking a few words I don't understand. This is bullshit and I want a rematch!

Our date ends not long after that. It's getting late, we both have work tomorrow and so Jace drives me home. Once there, I find myself shocked again when Jace leans over to press a lingering kiss to my lips that, if I were in the right state of mind would have lasted much longer.

However, my brain is currently mush when he pulls away and says, "Buenas noches."

All I do is dumbly nod, which appears to amuse him judging by the pure glee on his face. I try to gracefully step out of the car but end up tripping and nearly face planting. Sadly, that doesn't mean I'm not completely humiliated so, before Jace can say anything, I slam the door shut and create a new record on how quickly I can get from the parking garage to my apartment.

It isn't until I am in the safety of my room that I realize just how stupid I'm acting. What the fuck, Mylo? This isn't your first rodeo, stop acting like a dumbass! Holy shit, I need to calm down. My heart's racing way too fast and it's insanely hot. I end up undressing quickly before realizing that isn't helping and I need an absolutely freezing shower.

My dad is home and he asks me what I'm up to when he sees me walking from my room to the bathroom in nothing but a pair of boxers. The only reply he gets from me is a quick "shower" before I locked myself in the bathroom.

The moment I look into a mirror I'm ready to lose it.

Pressing my fingers to my completely reddened face, I have to ask myself if I've looked like this all day. My cheeks are red, eyes sparkling like I've seen the answers to the universe, my hair's a mess and there's this dumb smile on my face I can't get off. Try to think of dead puppies or something, stop looking so happy!

Except it doesn't work and all I can think about is that stupid kiss at the park. Then he had to be all boyfriend like and kiss me in the car, what the hell, Jace? Hijo de puta! Yeah, I know Spanish, of course it's a curse but that isn't the point!

I'm supposed to be angry. I need to be angry with him. He's lying to me about something. Whatever it is will likely affect this...relationship or whatever. I need to step up my game and find out what's going on rather than melt the moment he looks at me!

This is bad. This is so very bad.

Because now I know he's at least bisexual. I was wondering this whole time what I could do. Kiss him? Don't kiss him? Because if I made the first move and it made him uncomfortable then I'd feel like a complete jackass but...Jace has made the first move, which means I can make more moves? Right?

Standing beneath the cool water beating against my back, realization hits me.

Fuck, I can't do this anymore. We started dating because I wanted a quick fuck. Yeah, Jace was someone I had been interested in for some time but not...actually *romantically* . Now, now it's only getting worse. All these feelings are pointing to something I'm not ready for, especially if Jace isn't ready either.

Shit, thinking that he's possibly cheating on me, if I were my normal self I wouldn't care. I would have kicked him to the curb by now, called him out for it and moved on but that's the problem. I'm not myself. I don't want to call him out on it. For some dumb reason I want to keep believing everything is fine...because if it isn't I don't want to face that fact.

I need to end this.

~

Well that went south real quick, didn't it? I brought you all up with that kiss then BAM Mylo had to panic. So what do you think about their date? What about that kiss? And then Mylo's feelings afterwards? Do you see what really frightens Mylo and do you think he has the right to be worried? Let me know! I absolutely love these two aaaaaaaaah!!!!

IMG 011

"Mylo!"

I spin my head around to face Korey, who is looking at me in concern.

"Are you ok?" Korey questions after the fifth time that I've kicked the camera stand within the last hour. My toes are not appreciating it. "You're really out of it today."

"I'm fine," I lie with a smile that Korey doesn't seem convinced with.

She knows me too well and can sense when something is up. Normally at work I am focused, prepared, and hard working. Today though, I can't seem to remember when I am meant to do something. I've nearly dropped our camera's, *twice* . If that doesn't say something is wrong, I don't know what else would.

"Are you sick? Do you need to head home early?"

"No way." Because if I go home I won't have any distractions. "I'm fine, seriously, Korey."

Korey hums, tapping her foot for a moment before giving a shrug. She instructs me to start setting up for the next shoot, which will be some baby pictures. I'm all for that and quickly make sure there's nothing around the kiddo can get their paws on. While I'm off my game at work it still helps me through the day.

Ever since last night I've been out of sorts. My mind keeps veering off to think about Jace, the mystery caller, our relationship or lack thereof. There's a childish hope in my chest that I'm overreacting. Maybe this mystery caller is actually a relative or perhaps it's just a personal matter that he'll one day feel more comfortable discussing with me.

Each time I consider it I roll my eyes a little further into the back of my skull. Please, I'm being naive. Considering what Cierra told me, his history with girlfriends and those phone calls it's obvious Jace has an important person in his life and it sure as hell ain't me.

I snap the pencil in my grasp, the top of it falling to the floor where it rolls just before Korey's feet. She stares at me with wide eyes before asking, "What'd the pencil do to you?"

"It was the reason my teachers constantly bitched at me during class. Why didn't you bring a number two pencil? You can't fill in the circles without it," I grumble, glaring at the thing that I don't even know why we have sitting around the office.

Korey rolls her eyes and picks up the broken piece to toss in the trash. When the day comes to an end I actually kinda wish to do some overtime. Sadly, Korey isn't in need of it and I head home, the lack of work making it hard to calm myself. Since it's clear I am in need of a good talking to, I call up Olivia the moment I get home.

"Come over."

"Sure, uh, you ok?" Seems my tone clued Olivia in that something is up.

"No. We need a therapy session. I'm out of ice cream and forgot to pick some up, please bring a whole tub."

Olivia giggles. "I'm on it. I'll be over in a bit."

Nodding, I hang up with Olivia, ready to change into some comfy sweats when my phone lights up. Seeing Jace's name flash on the screen makes my heart skip. Once again, it reminds me of the absolute shit storm I've gotten myself into.

It's not surprising that he's messaging me either. I've been ignoring the boy all day. As usual, Jace sent a text when I woke up, *Buenos días* , to which I did not reply. Next were some *are you up, did you get to work ok, how are*

you, what are up to sort of texts that, again, I never replied to. The most recent one he has sent is a picture.

The photo he took of us at the park.

Seeing it makes me tempted to delete Jace from my contacts yet all I end up doing is saving the picture. With a chuckle that's a mixture of annoyance and exhaustion, I slip my phone into my back pocket and continue to ignore Jace. It's a bit hard to do but once Olivia arrives I feel capable of breathing freely.

"Why are we eating away our sorrows today?" Olivia asks, coming straight to me with a tub of ice cream. She knows what's up and I grab that tub before she can even sit down. All she does is giggle.

"I have problems."

"Believe me, I know."

I whack her over the head for that. She only laughs before heading into the kitchen to retrieve some spoons. When she returns we're both digging into the ice cream without care. I'm not quite ready to talk yet so I keep eating and Olivia knows well enough to wait.

Instead, she talks to me about her day, which consisted of her and Sonya being absolutely adorable pieces of garbage. I voice this and all Olivia can do is squeal happily. I'm glad to see it, the blush on her cheeks and the sparkle in her eyes. She deserves it.

"You two are perfect for each other," I say, slinging my arm over Olivia's shoulders to bring her closer to my side. She happily lets me and snuggles right up.

"Thanks," she whispers out of the blue causing me to give her a curious glance. Seeing my confusion, she smiles and goes on to explain, "You always made me tag along to parties, get togethers or any event that she was a part of. I never had the guts to do it myself and...if-if you didn't agree to our deal, I wouldn't have even asked her out so, y'know, thanks."

"You should give yourself more credit than that. It was your choice to come along to all those things and you were the one who asked her out. All I did was support you."

"You're good support."

"I know."

I smile when Olivia playfully punches my chest.

"So, what's up?" She inquires after I've finally taken a break from shoving my face with ice cream. It's currently sitting on the coffee table and I'm sure we'll jump right back into in a minute, especially after what I want to talk about.

"Is it about Jace?" And Olivia hit the nail right on the head.

I snap my fingers at her. "It is."

Olivia hums, showing that she isn't surprised. She shouldn't be, what else would be the problem?

"Jace kissed me yesterday."

Olivia's eyes go wide, more so when I hold up two fingers.

"Twice, actually, one of which was in public."

"Mylo, that's a good thing!" Olivia presses her hands against my thigh and starts to shake it. "He kissed you, like, he initiated it?"

I nod.

"That's great! I mean, Sonya and I were a bit worried he was just testing the waters or something but-" Olivia's excitement dies down when she notices that I am not following suit. Slowly, her smile fades to be replaced with a frown of concern. "But you don't think it's great?"

"The kiss was great, sure. I would have liked some tongue in there though."

Olivia groans.

"But now it feels like too much." I try to hold out my hands like that'll somehow show Olivia what I mean by "too much." It doesn't based on the tilt of her head.

"What do you mean?"

My hands are actually starting to shake a bit. Olivia notices this and only grows more concerned. I'm not really the type to get all bothered about a guy. Maybe when I was in middle school, first dating and all that but now I tend to be pretty confident. I've had my fair share of shitty dates, bad arguments with "boyfriends" and experiences that leave me feeling ready to face whatever's next.

However, right now I don't feel ready, not at all.

"I feel like I've crossed that line," I whisper, my voice actually trembling.

Olivia presses her arm against mine while asking, "What line?"

"You know, when people start dating there's usually that interval where it isn't that serious. You may be all cute and cuddly puppy dog love but that doesn't change the fact that if you broke up it wouldn't be that hard to get over it. Give yourself a few days, a week and it's like it never happened. That's where I've been with Jace the last few weeks, right there, where it's comfortable."

Olivia takes my hand in hers. She gives it a reassuring squeeze to remind me that she's listening and, with a shaky breath, I go on.

"I don't feel like I'm there anymore but Jace still is...and I need to end it before it gets worse."

Olivia bites her bottom lip, her thumb rubbing the back of my hand soothingly. A moment of silence passes between us while Olivia takes in my words. After a second, she nods and asks calmly, "What makes you think Jace doesn't care as much as you do?"

"I know he doesn't-"

"Mylo."

"Seriously, it feels like a big experiment with him. I mean, is he even into me? We don't know! I can kiss someone without caring so that means he could too. One second we're having fun and it feels like a normal date then the next that stupid caller ruins it. You should see his face, Olivia."

Thinking about it makes me ill.

"Whatever is going on, Jace isn't actually serious and I don't want to get to the point that I won't be able to handle it when I really realize that's true."

I look to Olivia for support now. Earlier she said I was the good support but so is she and I need that right now. Someone to tell me that they agree or what the hell I'm supposed to do. I'm not used to this shit and it's freaking me out.

Olivia takes a deep breath then asks, "Before you break it off, don't you think you should ask about it?"

"I did! He said it was his grandmother calling."

"And I bet you just ignored him afterwards."

Well, sort of. I got pissy about it but that's not odd.

Olivia shakes her head and pats my hands. "Listen, Mylo, you're awful at serious conversation. You always try to brush it off with jokes...particularly about sex."

I nod in agreement, which makes Olivia smile. Seeing that makes me smile a little too.

"But you need to have a real conversation, a real serious one, with Jace. Let him know that the calls are making you uncomfortable. If he cares, he'll discuss it with you. If he doesn't, you'll know something is up and you can

end it without any regrets. I-" Olivia hums like she's not sure how to phrase her next words. "-I just don't want you to break up then realize it was over something that could easily be fixed. It seems that you really like him-"

That's the problem.

"-If you like him that much, I want you guys to be happy."

"Keep saying sweet things and I'm going to make Sonya very jealous and kiss you."

Olivia ignores my "threat" and stands up, grabbing the ice cream as she does. I shout after her not to ignore me but she does exactly that while waltzing into the kitchen to put the ice cream away. I chuckle and spin around to face her.

"Thanks for listening."

Olivia looks back at me with a smile. "You know I always will."

So, while Olivia is still here and my mind isn't in total chaos, I turn back around and bring out my phone. For a moment I hesitate to respond but, after a mental pep talk, I send Jace a rather telling text, short but not so sweet.

We need to talk.

~

Hopefully this chapter cleared up a bit more about how Mylo feels. He isn't in love with Jace (yet ;D) but he's certainly on the road to it. He realizes that, so it scares him, especially when he has no idea if Jace is "testing the waters" with him or not. I hope that cleared things up and you see where he's coming from! Most did but some seemed a bit off.

IMG 012

Giving a " *we need to talk* " text feels almost as bad as receiving one. It's why I'm a bit of an anxious mess when our shared day off rolls around. Since there was a two day portion in the middle; our text messages were slim to say the least. We said good morning and good night, asked each other how our day was going and it sort of faded after that.

It's clear something is up and I wish to talk about it so, obviously, Jace will feel on his toes as well. Maybe that relieves me a bit and maybe I feel like an ass for it but it is what it is.

So, today we have plans to head to the mall. I do want to grab some new clothes since I will be starting college in two months. It's time to go through my closet, get rid of the clothes I either don't wear anymore or have seen too many days. I've already packed a few into a bag to drop off at Goodwill and now I shall replace them with newer items!

Wow, when I say it like that it feels like I am abandoning them. Ouch.

Once again, Jace offers to pick me up and drive us around. I'm not sure what his deal is with always being the one to drive but I'm ok with it. Yo, gas money is expensive and if I can save I am going to.

Receiving Jace's text makes me realize that I can't avoid the conversation I chose to bring up. Groaning, I slither off the couch, which earns a very confused expression from my dad in the kitchen. I feel his eyes on me all the way to do the door where he finally says, (almost questions), "Have...fun."

I groan again, flinging the door open before shutting it behind me.

What the hell was I thinking sending a "we need to talk" text? Am I insane? I should have just waited until we got some place quiet, or in the car, and brought it up. Knowing that Jace is in the parking lot waiting to have a serious conversation with me makes my skin crawl.

How do I even start anyways? The last few days I should have been thinking about that but, alas, I have done no such thing. Instead, I've only been freaking out, which doesn't help at all!

I'm doomed. We're both doomed.

Finding Jace is easy but getting into the car is not. I actually hesitate to do so after throwing my bag of clothes into the trunk. Since it's weird to just stand outside the car, I eventually open the door and slide in. Jace is waiting for me with a smile and while that smile of his can fool most I actually feel confident enough to say he's nervous. Those hazel eyes of his are giving off a feeling of concern that, again, almost makes me feel relieved.

"Do you want to stop at Goodwill first?" He asks, seeming to be ok with avoiding the subject. That's fine, so am I.

"Yeah, we can do that."

Quickly, I turn on the radio because the last thing we need is a dead silent car. Even with the radio on the tension is heavy enough to crush. It makes me dig my nails into my arms, which Jace notices. I can tell he does because he reaches over to knock his fingers against mine. The action makes said fingers tingle.

"Don't. You'll bruise yourself."

"Always the caring boyfriend." My voice comes out a bit more sarcastic than I wanted it to. Actually, I didn't want to give sass. It happens naturally.

"What do you mean?" Jace asks, his voice so soft that I feel bad for getting a little snippy.

"Nothing, forget it."

"Kind of hard to forget when you already said we needed to talk."

I was hoping he'd give me more time to consider what I want to say. No, that's not right. I was hoping we could avoid this even if I'm the one who

brought it up. Gah, my stomach is churning. I should have ate breakfast actually because I think the lack of food is making me feel even worse.

"Can we grab something to eat before we hit the mall?" I groan, rubbing my temple when it starts to pound.

Jace nods. "Yeah, you feeling ok?"

"I need to eat something."

Normally I would make some perverted remark and it seems Jace is expecting it because he keeps glancing at me like he's waiting for it. When no such thing happens, because I am mentally exhausted and nothing has even happened, Jace frowns. Neither of us speak up and, as if the universe is out to get me, Jace's phone decides to light up.

He glances for a mere second before looking away while I stare curiously at the screen. This time his phone is resting in the console beneath the stereo and I can now make out who "M" actually is.

Mackenzie.

So I was right, it's a girl that keeps calling and apparently texting too. That's not surprising but it still makes my blood boil. The air only grows hotter with the tension bubbling between us yet we remain silent until we finally reach Goodwill.

"I can get it," Jace says but I'm already stepping out of the car. He pops the trunk while I grab the bag to hand the girl that's coming out of the back doors.

And the world really seems to hate me because it's a familiar face. I can't quite put my finger on her name but my assumption of who she is is proven correct when she smiles and says, "Jace!"

She's an ex girlfriend. Oh joy.

"Hey, Nanette." Jace waves, that wave immediately disappearing when I send a glare over my shoulder.

The boy lingers by the trunk like he's worried if he gets too close something might happen. Something might, like me gnawing his arm off. Why does he have so many ex girlfriends? We can't go anywhere without running into one! Ok, so technically we've only "run into" one but there was the time with Cierra at the bowling alley! So we're going with twice!

"You're not working at your grandpa's shop today?" Nanette inquires, taking the bag from my hand but not returning to the store. She is looking back and forth between Jace and me with a kind smile.

"No, I'm off today. Mylo and I are going to the mall."

Oh, so he remembers I'm here? That's good. I figured with all the girls hanging on him in his life he'd forget about his boyfriend.

I need to get some food in me. I swear the sass is getting worse thanks to lack of food.

"Really? I was thinking of heading up after my shift ends!" Nanette announces, it's pretty obvious what she's suggesting and Jace, being the ever so loving boyfriend, is ready to decline. He's actually shaking his hand when I break into the conversation.

"If we're still there we can meet up."

Both Nanette and Jace look at me, one with a smile and the other with a shocked expression. Pretty obvious who is who but I refuse to give Jace the time of day while I focus all my attention on Nanette.

"What time do you get off?"

"I've only got an hour left actually."

"Cool, we're going to grab some food first so we can meet up after you get off."

Nanette eagerly nods, her eyes sparkling with joy while I give her a wave goodbye. I don't bother Jace with a single look before I spin around and jump right back into car. Who knows what the two talk about afterwards but

it doesn't last long. Soon the driver's side is opened and Jace gets into the car with a furrowed brow. I'm surprised he's so openly bothered actually.

There's clear confusion and frustration evident on his face. I half expect him to yell at me but this is Jace and Jace doesn't yell. Actually, he doesn't say anything when he finally turns away from me and puts his hands on the wheel. The car is started and we're off with Jace refusing to utter a word and, honestly, that's pissing me off more.

"Something wrong?" I ask while feeling very hypocritical.

"No, what's wrong with you?" He asks in return. I can actually hear him trying to keep his voice from shaking. "You said you wanted to talk but you're not saying what's wrong, instead you invite Nanette to hang out with us?"

"You ask that like I haven't spent time with one of your ex's before."

Jace doesn't hesitate to respond, which stumps me a bit, "In a public setting, I apologized after you made it obvious you didn't like it so how does this compare?"

"Shouldn't it be obvious that I didn't like it? Would you be ok if you hung out with one of my ex boyfriends?"

"Yes," Jace answers without even having to think about it and, again, that stumps me. His knuckles are starting to turn white on the wheel while he takes a deep breath. "Listen, my dad never let my mom hang out with anyone. He was possessive, controlling and jealous and I refuse to be like that."

His voice is low, shaking to the point that I can tell he's using all his willpower not to yell. I never intended for him to bring up his parents, especially since I know exactly how they passed. Murder-Suicide, something no one should have to go through let alone a seven year old kid. The fact that Jace refuses to raise his voice clues me in on what his dad was like even if everyone at school already has a pretty good idea. Now I feel like an asshole for making him even have to talk about it.

"You can hang out with your ex boyfriends. I will too if you want me to because I am not controlling your life or acting like an asshole to somehow prove my interest in you. You're not a piece of property. I don't own you and I never will so don't try to force me to act like it."

"That's not—" I bite my lip, unsure of what to say, especially after Jace's outburst. It's so out of character that I can't bring myself to respond. Sighing, I start to play with my seatbelt, twisting it around my hand and letting it go over and over while trying to think of what to say. I can only really think of one thing.

"Sorry," I whisper, keeping my gaze on my feet since I can't bare to look at Jace. "I didn't...I didn't mean to make it sound like that. It's not what I meant."

I'm shocked when Jace suddenly reaches over to take my hand in his. My eyes can't help but to stare at our intertwined hands now resting on my lap. Somehow there's a heat emanating off them so strong that I can feel it in my chest.

Fuck, I'm so screwed.

"I'm sorry too," Jace mumbles, which has me finally looking at him in confusion because, honestly, what is he sorry for? I was the one acting like an ass, which isn't unusual. "I didn't mean to get mad."

"Is that what you call mad?" I send him a smile that makes Jace's shoulders finally relax. "It was pathetic."

Jace squeezes my hand just as we pull into the parking lot of a restaurant. We both hesitate to get out, Jace not taking his hand away from my own. I learn why when Jace asks, "Is that what you wanted to talk about?"

"Huh?" Oh right, there was something I wished to discuss but we kind of got off track. "No, not exactly."

Jace waits patiently for me to bring it up, which only makes my stomach churn. There's no use avoiding it though. If I do then we'll end up in another

argument. I don't like making Jace angry, even if his anger pales in comparison to my own.

"The girl that always calls and messages you, Mackenzie—"

Jace's eyes go wide.

"Who is she?"

The hand holding mine shakes a moment before Jace regains his composure. Looking away, he hesitates to speak, which only puts me more on edge. He doesn't want to talk about her? Why? What's their relationship? If there's something going on just tell me so we can break this off before I lose it.

I'm not sure what makes Jace finally cave but he does. There's a heavy sigh that even I can feel the weight of before he says, "She's my brother's girlfriend...was my brother's girlfriend."

Fantastic, I dredged up another awful memory.

"Sorry," I immediately blurt out, shaking my head to show we can end the conversation with that. "I—we don't need to talk about Mateo if you...I'm sorry, I shouldn't have asked."

I should have believed Olivia and assumed it was a family member! Mackenzie basically is if she was dating Mateo before he died. Somehow I've managed to bring up Jace's parents and brothers death all in one day. Hell, it hasn't even been a year since Mateo's car wreck so that wound is still fresh.

I've peaked. I'm at the top tier of what an asshole is. I am garbage and I need to fall into a hole and die.

"It's fine," Jace says but I don't believe him. Especially with the way his eyes have darkened, like he's remembering something troubling. "We need to talk about it since she'll be calling more with—" Jace lets go of my hand

to pull away. My hand feels cold without his. "—with the anniversary coming up. If that bothers you, I can ask that she doesn't call me."

"No!" I quickly interject, waving my hands frantically, which has Jace eying me suspiciously. "I was only worried because you were acting strange but I get it. If she needs to talk then I understand and if you need to talk—"

Where the hell am I going with this? I don't fucking no and my hands can't stop flailing through the air. It's ok though because Jace is finally starting to smile and that makes my stupidity worth it.

"I mean, if you need to talk then I'm...here?"

Why do I make that sound like a question?

Jace chuckles, bringing up his hand to ruffle his hair like he's stalling to speak. When he drops his hand back into his lap, all his jaw does is hang open for a moment before snapping shut. We're both left sitting there just staring at each other in silence and I don't know what the fuck I'm meant to do. Did I miss this up? Did I say something wrong? I have no clue.

It seems I have not messed it up though when Jace reaches out to press his hand to my cheek. Said cheeks are now bursting with color but I can't panic about that yet since I'm panicking over the sudden close proximity of our lips. Jace's eyes are locked with my own, the practically burning embers within his eyes makes my heart decide to say "fuck it" and stop working entirely.

Jace's hand slowly moves its way back to twist his fingers into my hair and, with that, he leans in for a kiss that is nothing like our first. It's long and frustrating but in the best of ways believe me. There's almost a hunger to it, Jace's teeth coming out to nip at my bottom lip teasingly. While his tongue runs over the seam of my lips he never does more than that and damn it, he best do something or I am going to freak!

It has me leaning closer, my own hand coming out to cradle his neck, feeling the pulse beating beneath my fingertips. It's encouraging, makes my own heart match the beat. The car is growing hotter by the second and I feel

like any minute I may actually burst into flames. Obviously no such thing happens but the sparks only intensify when Jace finally presses his tongue into my mouth.

This fucker tried to make me think he was a bad kisser. I will end him! Only after I've quenched my thirst, which may be never judging by the absolutely electrifying way his tongue rolls over the expanse of my mouth. It leaves me breathless, not to say I wasn't before yet somehow Jace manages to intensify everything I'm feeling with a single flick of his tongue.

And when Jace pulls away I'm only left with the desire for more. Seeing his eyes looking back into mine has turned my brain to completel mush. When he smiles, it only gets worse.

"Eres muy lindo."

"I'm googling that right now," I whisper, the sound so breathy that I'm actually embarrassed.

Shaking his head, Jace pulls away and his heat is missed immediately. However, there's a teasing smirk on his lips that makes me think I'll be getting a kiss like that again sometime soon. I sure as hell am because if he thinks once I've learned how great of a kisser he is that we aren't making out constantly than he is actually insane!

"I'm looking it up, I'm serious!" I call after the boy after he's out of the car. My phone is already out and I'm trying to determine how any of it is spelled.

Jace doesn't seem to mind, waving it off while heading to the entrance. It isn't until he's at the door that I find a translation that makes sense.

You're really cute.

"Did you find it?" Jace shouts from the doorway, grinning from ear to ear when I look at him with a face that I know is blushing full force.

Quickly, I put my phone away and refuse to admit that I found the translation or...that I really hope he keeps saying it.

~

So we know who "M" is. How do you think the "talk" went? And we got more of a look into Jace's life. Did you expect it and do you understand how it has effected him? But how about that fluff at the end? :D Cuties~

IMG 013

Lunch is surprisingly comfortable after the travesty that was our conversation earlier. I even find myself totally shocked when I catch Jace texting Nanette.

"What are you doing?" I ask after he sits his phone down to so openly show that he has messaged her. My heart clenches a bit at the memory of how much of a dick I was followed by sadness that I invited her.

"Telling Nanette we can't hang out," Jace replies with a shrug. When he looks at me, his lips pull back into a devilish grin. "Because I'm on a date with you."

I am forced to pop an ice cube into my mouth in hopes to cool my flaming cheeks. It doesn't help, this smooth mother fucker is gonna be the end of me. There's no way I'm responding to that so I don't and, instead, sink into the booth while Jace snickers.

"You seem to know a lot about my ex-girlfriends," Jace says causing me to stare at him in confusion. "But I don't know much about your ex-boyfriends."

"There's not much to tell." I push myself back into a normal sitting position, leaning against the table while I recall the two that actually held the "boyfriend" title. There were others but they weren't exactly boyfriend's in the sense that he's talking about. "I never really dated much."

"Oh."

"Oh?" I cock a brow at his tone that didn't even sound surprised. "Your tone says you aren't shocked to learn that."

"I'm not."

"Why does everyone imply that I'm a slut?"

Jace snorts. "I'm not, besides, you can have as many lovers as you want, it's your body. But I do know you aren't always the most serious so I'm not surprised that dating isn't always serious either."

I place a hand against my chest in fake pain. Jace doesn't buy it and rolls his eyes at me but leans forward to listen. I'm not sure what he expects me to say. There really isn't much to tell so I shrug.

"I have been told I get worked up over stupid things but don't actually care about the important ones." Both of my ex's said something along those lines. I don't really disagree with it either. When things get serious I like to back off and when it's stupid I get heated about it. I'm the exact opposite of what I should be.

Jace appears a little confused, like he doesn't get what they meant. I don't see how, he has already witnessed my moments.

"That's not true," he says with a firm shake of his head. "You do tend to play off serious situations but everyone handles them differently. It's not right or wrong and, honestly, I kinda like it."

Say what?

"You make everything feel like it's going to be ok...although sometimes you do get a little annoying." Jace winks at me, his sweet talk being ruined by his teasing. I kick him beneath the table for it too, which has him cursing at me under his breath but we both fall into laughter afterwards.

Even if I don't thank him, I am happy to hear it. No one has ever said that to me before and maybe the fact that it's Jace makes it even better but, we don't need to focus on that.

Our day goes by without any further interruptions or surprises. There are no strange messages or mysterious callers. The two of us simply enjoy our day, cracking jokes around the mall, Jace desperately trying not to buy every blue shirt he sees and me resisting the urge to go into Spencers with him because we all know that would end badly.

The date ends and I'm all fluffy and googly eyed by the end of it. My dad might think I'm crazy judging by his confused expression after I return home but who cares. I go to sleep with a shit eating grin on that night.

~

Strange how the simplest of things can change your whole mood. Yesterday, I was so pissed at Jace and now I'm obsessed like on of those cheesy school girls from shitty Hollywood movies.

I've been acting like I'm on cloud nine since Jace decided to make out with me in his car, *twice* . Thinking about it makes me snicker when I recall our rather long kissing session when he dropped me off last night. Then I start to feel like an idiot for overreacting by some tongue action and try to keep a straight face.

It doesn't work. I'm grinning like the cheshire cat a second later.

To make this disease even worse, I ended up printing out that picture Jace sent me of our day at the park. It's already framed and sitting alongside the graduation one on my bedside table. Each time I go into my room and see it I feel like tossing it in the trash but only because it's proof of how screwed I am.

Sure, there's plenty of other things that point that out like my inability to stop thinking about anything other than Jace. Here I am, lounging about on the couch in a depressed state because Jace is at work and I'm all alone. Thinking things like "I want to see him," or "I wonder if he wants to hang out after work," ugh, I'm disgusting. I need to see a doctor to cure me of this sickness.

Rolling onto my side, I grab the remote to turn on the TV. I have plans to hang out with Olivia and Sonya later but for now I'm going to be lazy. Except I'm not really paying attention to the TV but rather thinking about the fact that Jace and I have been together over a month now. It feels so much shorter than that yet summer is nearing its end.

Jace will be a senior at the end of August and I'll be a freshman in college. It always felt like it was so far away but now it's in reach and that freaks me out. Adding Jace into the mix only makes it worse because I'm already asking myself how I'll make time to see him. Since I'll be working and going to school it'll be tough and the fact that I'm considering all this scares me.

I'm falling into that pit again where I'm worrying if Jace is thinking along the same lines. This is serious. I'm serious and that's fucking terrifying. I've never been like this, never had these sorts of desires and it's making me confused. How the hell do people handle thinking like this all the time? I feel like I've got a headache and it hasn't even been two months!

Groaning, I sit up while turning off the TV upon realizing I can't deal with having nothing to do. It's clear I need to get out of the house so I grab my camera and do exactly that. There's no set destination in mind so I just walk around town snapping pictures of whatever I damn well feel like it. It's hot and I'm a sweaty mess by the end of it. It helps keep my mind clear until I get home to take a shower and get ready to hang out with Olivia and Sonya, who both notice something is up the second I get into Sonya's car.

"What's wrong with your face?" Olivia asks, reaching back to poke my cheeks. She should know not to do that.

I bite her finger, the girl squeals before pulling away. Scowling, she hisses at me, "What the hell, Mylo?"

"Don't poke me, peasant."

"I'll show you peasant." Olivia is about to jump into the back seat to attack me when Sonya reaches over to pat her thigh. The action turns Olivia into a pile of mush, her scowl turning into a smile instantly.

"Gross," I comment, earning an eye roll from the both of them. Wow, I'm impressive.

"Please, you should see your face," Sonya says, pulling out of the parking lot to take us bowling. I'm not sure why everyone wants to go bowling

recently. "Did you have fun with Jace yesterday?"

"We finally made out. I've been blessed."

Olivia facepalms. Sonya looks a little concerned. That's fine, I don't care. I have priorities, the best kind of priorities and I'm ok with them.

"Jace sure has gotten himself into some trouble," Sonya teases, making me flip her off from the backseat. All she does is grin in response.

"Did you two have your talk then?" Olivia asks. Oh right, she thought yesterday was meant to be the "talk" day so probably suspected I had bad news. Judging by her confused face, she is unsure of how our "talk" turned into making out.

"Right, turns out the mystery M was Mateo's girlfriend, Mackenzie."

Both Sonya and Olivia know about Mateo, of course they do, we went to high school with him. Sure, he was a junior when we were sophomores so it's not like we were all pals, however, everyone knew about what happened. When school started there was a whole "don't drink and drive" assembly and, obviously, Jace did not show up to that. If they expected him to then fuck them.

"Oh," Olivia hums, nodding in understanding. "The anniversary is coming up soon, isn't it?"

I nod. I wish I remembered the date and I sure as hell don't want to ask. I'll likely have to google it later since, on that day, Jace may not want to be bothered. I wouldn't blame him for it either. It'll be the one year anniversary. Just thinking about it gives me the shivers and I can't imagine what he's going through.

"It must be tough on both of them," Sonya mumbles, her voice soft and concerned. "I get why the two still talk."

"Yeah. I managed to be a total ass."

"Mylo," Olivia sighs, shaking her head while reaching back to take my hand. "That's not true. You were concerned and you had every right to be. I'm sure Jace understands."

"Doesn't mean I wasn't an ass."

"I'm sure he's used to it by now because you're always an ass."

I smack her hand away. The girl giggles, returning to sitting properly in the front. Our conversation turns from there, the three of us happily joking around until we arrive at the bowling alley. There we play against one another with Olivia remaining in the lead because she's a bitch like that, Sonya is second and, obviously, I'm last.

Jace messages me after work but I make no mention of bowling. Something tells me if I did he'd come right over even if he's tired, which he claimed to be. He's one of those guys, the ones that come running even if they're exhausted and I don't wanna make the kid feel like passing out especially when he's working at the auto shop tomorrow too.

Judging by how much he helps out, I'm assuming he plans on taking it over when he graduates. That's something I should ask too, what are his future plans? Does he want to go to college? Does he plan on taking over his grandfather's shop? Is he sticking around?

Oh shit, I'm thinking about our future together as if it's a guarantee. For the love of god, someone smack the shit out of me. I'm in trouble.

"Mylo, you ok?" Olivia asks upon realizing how silent I've been.

"I'm gonna die."

Sonya snorts while Olivia simply stares while waiting for an explanation. I do no such thing so the two wave it off. Rude but ok, I get it. They're used to my antics but still it still it annoys me.

My attention is drawn back to my phone when Jace messages me. Upon reading the message, I'm not too sure how to respond.

Do you mind if I go shopping with Mackenzie this weekend?

I suppose now that I know about her he doesn't mind bringing her up or he's aware that it bothered me so he's making himself bring it up. Once again, I feel like an ass for making him think he has to ask permission to hang out with someone. Then I feel like more of an ass for being a little happy that he asked. Seriously, something is wrong with me. A doctor probably can't even save me at this point.

Sighing, I inform him that I don't mind and he doesn't have to ask me for permission. His response makes me want to beat his face in with a bowling ball.

Even if you're cute when you're jealous, I don't want to upset you so I'll play it safe and ask =P

This fucker keeps calling me cute. I'll show him fucking cute. And who the hell was jealous? I wasn't jealous, I was concerned, there's a difference!

"Mylo, it's your turn," Sonya calls, smiling when I look up at her. She glances to my phone then back to my face and something tells me she knows who I'm texting. "Jace smooth talking you?"

"Huh?"

"Your face is all red."

I touch my face like that'll somehow inform me if it is or not. The action makes both girls giggle and coo at me. I threaten to shave both their heads if they don't stop. My threat is ignored but a miracle happens and I get a strike. Olivia is about to pass out from shock while Sonya is whistling and I decide to only bowl while angry from now on. Clearly it's the best way to win!

By the end of the night I'm regretting not inviting Jace. I mean, the majority of the time I'm messaging with him while Sonya and Olivia are being all cutesy with each other. It's disgusting and I rather not witness it. When I

mention this they both slap me, more reason Jace should be here so I could stare at his face rather than the disgustingly adorable couple.

After our games, Sonya drives me home. I wish both of them a goodnight before returning to the apartment. Dad is nowhere to be seen. He's probably out with a colleague or something. I am proven correct or at least close when I read the note on the fridge stating not to wait up and eat dinner without him. It's well past nine o'clock though so it's past dinner time. I do end up getting a snack though before retiring to my room.

There I decide to do my research and discover the anniversary of Mateo's passing. I rather not piss Jace off or upset him during an already tense time. Asking him may bring up some painful memories too and it's not like the information is hard to find.

I manage to come across the local report easily, clicking on the news and seeing a picture of the wreckage. One look and someone can easily assume someone died. The head on collision with a truck resulted in Kent's, Mateo's friend according to the article, car to be completely demolished. Neither of them survived, both were heavily intoxicated and the article goes on talking about how both boys had full ride scholarships to college. They had bright futures and, from what I remember of Mateo, he was a friendly guy.

A few times I caught him and Jace in the halls. Mateo seemed like the doting older brother, always checking up on Jace, messing with him when he saw him, the two seemed really close. I guess that makes a lot of sense considering what little information I know about Jace's parents. Something tells me Mateo raised Jace more than his parents did until they started living with their grandparents.

I would ask but I fear it will only dredge up awful memories. It's probably too soon to talk about Mateo anyways. One year may sound like a long time but, it was his brother he lost. Judging by his expression talking about him, Jace isn't over it and I don't blame him. He never will be. The fact that he's gone through so much and turned out as well as he did is a miracle. I'm sure Mateo is partially a reason for that, as are his grandparents. One day, I hope he'll tell me about it.

I make sure to take note of the date, August 22nd, I'll make sure to remember it.

~

So Mylo is realizing how serious he is about Jace but is Jace as serious about him? What more is there to learn about our boys? :)

IMG 014

When Jace agreed to date me I never thought we'd get to the point where I feel like our relationship is normal. Hell, I never thought it'd last more than a week. Maybe I'd get a kiss or a quick jerk off in the car before it ended but now, two months later...

It's so normal it's a little sick. I mean, it feels like we're dating because we *are* dating. Texting each other, calling one another, going on dates, that's what couples do and that's what we've been doing. There's even been a few bits of kissing thrown in there, which I am the most happy about, lets be honest.

I suppose what is making me think about it like that is the fact that we have been together for this long. The thing with Mackenzie is...kind of cleared up. She still texts and calls a lot, which irks me but I hope that changes after the anniversary passes. She's probably really feeling bad now that August is upon us. However, my mood is a bit more pissy than usual since I haven't seen Jace in four days because our schedules won't match up.

There's been a plethora of wedding's Korey and I have been attending and, sadly, that means a lot are in the evening. Jace is off in the evening and I'm at work, which results in our "not seeing each other for four days" status. I can't help but to feel like I'm the only one that's bothered. Jace always plays it off like it can't be helped. Part of me kind of wants him to complain or whine or say that he misses me and wishes I would call off. At the same time, I rather die than say that out loud or say such things to him so I don't know why I expect him to say it.

Sighing, I glare at the message from Jace that once again claims it's all right that we can't hang out tonight. I have yet another wedding reception to snap some pictures of. Normally that's exciting because free food and we all know wedding food is catered and it's fucking great. However, I rather be making out with Jace so if we could wrap it up quick, that'd be nice!

"What's up, Mylo?" Korey asks from the driver's seat. "You usually love receptions but you keep glaring at your phone. Having boy troubles, are we?"

"Shut it," I hiss while my boss giggles. "Why do so many people get married? What's so great about being tied to a single person for the rest of your life, although, they are likely going to cheat on you at some point then you divorce and, for some reason, get remarried because the first one worked out so well?"

Korey whistles, glancing at me from the corner of her eye before returning to the road. "Wow, you are extra saucy today."

"I'm in a mood." I wave my hand through the air, glaring once more at my phone when it buzzes.

It's Jace again, probably because I didn't answer his text earlier. I know the message is likely innocent, something along the lines of "how's work" or "what's up" and that will make me angrier to read so I'm ignoring it too.

"Clearly." She sounds pleased and it makes me stare at her in confusion. Korey doesn't explain why she is so chipper about it but the fact that she finds amusement in my pain proves why I'm her assistant. We're the only ones who understand each other.

The two of us arrive at the reception shortly afterwards. Korey and I greet the happy bride and groom. We snap some pictures for them as per usual before going about to take more pictures of people simply enjoying themselves. There's obviously a DJ and a dance floor, which we get some good shots of. There is an amazing looking cake that I will be digging into later and so much food that it kind of makes me feel better.

Korey notices and suggests I grab some. Obviously I agree and head on over, more than excited to get me some food. Sadly, the universe is out to get me and has to not only ruin my plans but completely shatter me when I see the one person that I rather not ever see again.

"Mylo."

"Danielle," I hiss upon seeing the blue eyes staring back at me that I sadly share.

My mother is standing before me looking all prim and proper as I remember her to always be. Her red hair that's as thick and chaotic as mine is pulled back into a bun that manages to keep it looking presentable. It's been, what, almost a decade since I've seen her and she hasn't changed a bit. *Witchcraft.*

Danielle frowns when hearing her name. "Can't you call me mom?"

"Can you start acting like one?"

She purses her ruby lips and I can see in her eyes the fire to start an argument. Good, I'm in the mood to blow a fuse so bring it on. We haven't talked since she left, got a few cards here or there, a friend request on facebook back in that day but that was it. All she did was pack her bags and go without explanation so I am full of unbridled rage.

However, Chad comes to save the day, the dick she cheated on my dad with. Pun intended.

"Danielle, are you–" Chad stops mid sentence when he sees me. His brown eyes blink rapidly, for a moment it appears he doesn't recognize me. I don't blame him, neither him or my mother have seen me since she left. I'm a spitting image of my mother though so even he did, he easily remembers. "Mylo, it's been a while."

"Not long enough," I answer moments before a child appears at Chad's side. The boy is young, probably under 10 years old. Seems my mother is contagious because the beast looks just like her too.

They have a kid. *They have a kid.* This disgusting bitch went off and had a kid with this dirt bag?

That unbridled rage is a now a volcano ready to blow. All the times I sat in my room thinking of what I would say if I saw my mom again, if I heard her voice, it's all coming back to me. I wish to scream it at her. I want to rip her hair out. I want to stomp her face in. I want to do all that and hug her at

the same time and it's so frustrating that I can't bring myself to breathe properly.

All these years I've been wondering what she's been doing, where she went and why she left. Turns out she left because her family wasn't good enough.

I wasn't good enough.

"Uh, Will, why don't you go play with Chelsea?" Chad suggests, good thing too because this is going to get ugly. The demon child, aka Will, seems a bit confused. He looks to me and smiles. I don't return the gesture. "Will, go on."

Will obviously doesn't want to but does as he's told. He does linger at my side for a moment before passing, looking up at me like he's in shock. Seems he is unaware he has a half brother, cool, I was unaware until this moment too. I'm not surprised though, why would Danielle speak of me, the child she apparently never wanted?

Will disappears, allowing the adults to continue their discussion. I say discussion but that's not really what it is or what it's going to be.

"You know Mary and Greg?" Danielle asks, speaking of the bride and groom.

"I'm here for work." I gesture to Korey, who is going around taking pictures of guests. Both Danielle and Chad glance at her before returning their gaze to me.

"You're still into photography, that's good. It's good to have a hobby."

"I'm going to college for it."

Danielle crinkles her nose in disgust. Oh, photography not good enough for ya? Want me to go to Harvard or some shit?

Chad presses his hand to her arm but she doesn't seem to care.

"You're a smart boy, Mylo. Clearly there are better jobs that offer–"

"Don't," I growl. My face is heating up, I imagine my cheeks match my hair right now.

"Don't what?"

"Try to lecture me like you're my mother."

"I am–"

"Bitch, please, all you did was spread your legs and, trust me, even I can do that."

Danielle's face is turning red with frustration too. Chad is pinching the bridge of his nose while biting at his bottom lip. Around us a few people are staring or walking by in confusion. Chad is clearly growing uncomfortable. I bet some of these people are his colleagues or he knows personally so I doubt he wants them to see his family drama. Wouldn't want their reputation to be hurt, oh no, that'd be awful!

"Mylo, I didn't raise you to act like this–"

"You didn't raise me at all," I interrupt, pointing accusingly at her before turning it to Chad. He stares at me in confusion but that soon turns to a mixture of frustration and guilt at what I have to say next. "You abandoned us for this jackass to start another family because your first one wasn't good enough. And how long were you cheating on dad with him before you actually left?"

Danielle takes quick steps forward, her hand grasping my bicep. The tip of her nails dig into my skin while she tugs me towards the exit. I quickly slap her hand away causing her to gasp while she cradles her hand to her chest. Chad is at her side in a minute, putting himself between the two of us.

"Mylo, this is not the place to be having this discussion," Chad says, glancing all around. The music is loud but apparently not loud enough to keep everyone from growing curious.

I suppose he's right. We're at someone's wedding and I rather not ruin it with family drama. Actually, I rather not have any drama at all. All these questions I have for her, I suddenly don't want to ask because I don't care. I don't care what her answer is or what bullshit excuse she tries to give. She abandoned us and it's as simple as that. Nothing she says or does will ever make me forgive her so there's no use talking.

Shaking my head, I step away from them both, waving my hands through the air.

"You're right," I sigh after dropping my hands to my side. "It's not and, honestly, I don't care."

Danielle furrows her brow in confusion.

"Whatever you have to say, I don't want to hear it. It won't change my mind so keep doing what you've been doing and act like you didn't have a family before this one."

With that, I turn and walk away.

"Mylo!" Danielle calls after me. I hear her heels clicking against the floor. She catches up but I brush her off again and again until we're both outside. Once there, I turn around and shove her back. She barely catches herself on the railing of the stairs.

"Do not touch me again," I order her and, after doing so, realize that my voice is shaking. Something along the line of tears are building up in my eyes but I rather not think about that. Lets keep acting like I don't have such emotions.

"Obviously you don't have anything to say. You haven't contacted me in all these years but now we stumble upon each other and you want to talk?" I back away from her, shaking my head as I do. "Leave me the fuck alone like you've been doing."

Danielle doesn't reply because we both know she doesn't have one. There's nothing she has to say that can fix this. Dad never talked much about their

divorce, only told me after I got older that she cheated. Looking back on it, I can even see it. The times she left during the night without any real excuse, calling nannies to watch me or Chad coming over for a visit while dad wasn't there. As a child, I didn't see it but, once I got older it was clear as day.

Sure, she was probably unhappy. Dad worked a lot back then too, not nearly as much as now but enough that Danielle rarely got attention from him. I can see why she grew to be unhappy but it's the way she handled it that pisses me off. She probably realizes that now too and wants to mend it but she can't. Simple as that.

"If you want to talk I can–"

"No," I interrupt her without hesitation. "I don't want to speak to you again."

There seems to be genuine pain on her face but I don't care. There's not a single part of me that feels guilty, not even when she turns and walks away. However, once she's gone, I feel like I'm going to vomit. The world starts to spin and I drop to my knees, my hands coming up to twist into my hair.

Holy shit, I never thought I'd see her again. Sure, when I was younger I used to think about it, dream about it but never thought it'd actually happen. Now that it has, I don't know how to handle it. There's no way I can go back in there so I call Korey up to inform her.

"What happened, Mylo?" She asks after coming outside to check up on me. I'm now sitting on the sidewalk, picking at the few weeds that grew through the cracks.

"I saw...my mom," I whisper, glancing back at her to see the concern etched on her face. "Sorry, I can't go back in there. You mind if I head home early?"

"Do you have a ride?" She asks. She's the one who drove us and my car is at her shop.

"I can get one."

Korey glances back at the venue then to me. It takes a moment but she agrees and asks if I'd like some company till my ride arrives. I tell her no. I much rather be alone right now and she must sense it because she nods and heads back inside. Once she's gone, I take a deep breath, trying to calm myself before calling Jace. I don't want him getting worked up if he happens to hear something in my voice. Hopefully by the time he gets here I'll be calmed down and he won't ask too many questions.

"Hey Mylo, what's up? I thought you were working," Jace answers happily. The moment he does I hear noise in the background. It sounds like a TV followed by some joyous laughter that slowly fades into the distant. I'm assuming he has left whatever room he was in.

"I am but, uh, are you busy?" I ask when I hear someone call Jace's name. The voice sounds oddly familiar, and it is, because Jace shouts back at his abuela about something.

"Ah, my grandparents, Mackenzie and I are watching some movies. If you are heading home soon, want to stop over?" Jace inquires with such innocence it hurts while my chest aches at the mention of Mackenzie.

She's at their house? His grandparents are there so that makes me feel better but, at the same time, it hurts. I'm more worked up than usual and that isn't helping. My hands are tightening into fists while my phone starts to shake next to my ear. I shouldn't be mad, I don't have the right to be. She's allowed to be at his house and watch TV. I have no say in the matter.

"No, sorry to bother you, I was just bored and thought we could chat for a bit," I lie, picking at the weeds around me even more. They should hire me as a gardener, I'm getting good at this. "I better get back though and let you enjoy your movie."

"It's fine, Mylo. We can chat for–"

"Nah, Korey will get mad if I'm on here too long so I'll talk to you later." It's getting harder to control my voice. I can feel it starting to shake and the

last thing I want to do is clue Jace in that something's wrong.

It's stupid, I know it is. Isn't he my boyfriend? He should be the one I tell but I can't bring myself to do it. I don't know if it's because I'm not ready to talk about it or I'm not ready to talk to *Jace* about it. If Mackenzie wasn't mentioned, would I have brought it up? That's a good question.

"Ok, you're off tomorrow though, right?"

I hum in response.

"I asked my abuelo for the day off so I'll see you then."

Wait a second, I'm about to argue but it's too late, Jace is cutting me off.

"See you tomorrow!" With that, he hangs up, probably because he knew I was about to argue. Damn.

Sighing, I sit aside my phone, staring at it while biting at my bottom lip. Hopefully tomorrow I can keep a straight face. I say that like I would have been able to do it today. What the hell is wrong with me?

What am I going to do tomorrow though? Jace and I are going to hang out and I know I'll be moody. He'll probably want to know why, I won't want to tell him and end up chewing him out without meaning to. This is how it goes, that's how I am, I'm going to fuck it up and be mean to Jace who doesn't deserve it.

Maybe I should lie and say I'm not feeling well? I don't know, I'll figure it out tomorrow.

I call Sonya next since she has a vehicle. She's quick to agree and claims she'll be on her way soon. While waiting, I wonder about Jace and Mackenzie. My heart can't seem to stop aching at the thought of it. Imagining them sitting on the couch together, sharing popcorn and watching TV, it bothers me in ways I can't explain. I know what the feeling is and I've told Jace before I'm a jealous person but this is ridiculous.

It's because of what happened earlier. I'm already riled up so it's hard to control myself, that's obviously it.

~

I've got another story out called, "Invisible Boy." It's complete. If you want some more cute with a mixture of action in your life, check it out!

Uh oh, Mylo ran into his mom, did you see that coming? How do you think he handled it? Should he have told Jace and why is he so scared to do so? What's going to happen tomorrow? Uh oh spaghetti o's!

IMG 015

Proof that I couldn't have lasted if Jace picked me up is Sonya asking the moment I step into the vehicle, "You ok?"

Good thing she picked me up.

"Fine," I answer too swiftly for my own good. Sonya's frown informs me she isn't buying my bullshit. Pity, I thought it was pretty good shit.

"For you to leave work early it mustn't be fine."

"I didn't say I was leaving early."

She's giving me the look. The one someone gives when they don't want to argue with you but they know they can and they will win if they do. Still, I don't respond to her. Instead, I lean against the car door while resting my head against the glass. Feeling the cool glass on my skin actually helps.

Sonya is speaking but her voice isn't reaching me. My body is relaxing until I feel my eyes close and...that's it.

I wake up, completely unaware that I had fallen asleep in the first place, when Sonya shakes me. Shocked, I sit up so fast that my seat belt locks and pushes me right back down. Sonya giggles and smiles at me from the drivers side while I glance around to find that we're already at my place.

When and how in the fuck?

"I didn't think it'd be a good idea to let you drive home," Sonya explains since my car is still at Korey's and that was where we were meant to go. "You were out cold."

"Oh, thanks," I mumble, rubbing my tired eyes. I didn't even know I was tired but I must have been exhausted to have passed out the moment I got in the car. She was right, it was good I didn't drive.

"No problem." Sonya shrugs. Her gaze tells me she wants to ask something. I'm tempted to just leave because I know that if she asks I won't give her an answer but I decide to humor her.

"What is it?" I ask around a tired yawn. "You look like you want to ask something."

"Why couldn't Jace get you?" She inquires, her voice doesn't give away any annoyance for having to get me instead. Rather, she sounds concerned, like she doesn't like the idea that my boyfriend couldn't pick me up.

Well, he could but I didn't want him to for plenty of stupid reasons that I rather not discuss so let's not!

"He was busy," I answer, taking off my seat belt while trying to leave as fast as I can. I don't want to explain because I know Sonya is going to tell me what I already know. I'm acting stupid.

While I'm jumping out of the car, Sonya asks if I'd like her to follow me up or hang out for a bit. I shake my head and insist she get home, quickly heading inside before she can try to argue. I really just want to be alone, maybe lay back down and go to sleep early but now my senses are on full alert. That power nap has made it impossible for me to shut my eyes so I'm left pacing my bedroom like a mad man.

There is far too much going on in my head right now. I'm thinking about running into Danielle, all the emotions from my childhood have returned with a vengeance. It's making my entire body burn with an uncontrollable anger, something I haven't felt for a long time. When I hit high school I was even more annoyed with her for leaving because, high school is tough and she should have been here to help me through it! Except she wasn't then we run into each other and she wants to talk? Bitch, please!

Then there's Chad and Will. She goes off and, I'm assuming, gets married to the man she cheated on my dad with and they have a kid? How can they be in a happy relationship when they both know she is the type of woman who can cheat? I-I can't. I don't get it. I can't handle all this right now, especially with Jace and Mackenzie being topped onto all that.

Now that isn't something I should be thinking about because, again, his grandparents are there. It's clearly like a family get together and they consider Mackenzie family. I can't tell him to not hang out with family because I'm...because I'm feeling...

Jealous? Worried? Scared? So much at once that I don't get how I'm still standing.

I need to get a bath. That's it, I'm lighting some fucking candles, putting them on the edge of the tub and having me a bubble bath! I need to relax and play in the soap suds like I did when I was kid. I am making a beard out of soap and nothing is going to stop me!

So that is exactly what I do. Santa Claus it up bitches.

I sit in the tub of bubbles until I turn all pruney and, when I feel like I can breathe again, I step out to clean up my mess. Finally, my mind has enough ease that I can rest in bed. The TV is on but once more I cannot bring myself to pay attention. Thoughts and feelings linger in the back of my mind and, although I fall asleep, all that comes to me are nightmares.

I awake the next morning after an absolute shitty night of sleep. Most of it I was tossing and turning, waking suddenly and groaning or staring at the clock in hopes it will help me sleep. It didn't and it's why I'm so moody that my dad doesn't even tell me good morning. He simply stares when I walk into the kitchen to get some food.

I am on autopilot and start our breakfast because that's usually what I do if we're both here and awake. I don't even ask him what he wants, simply make it, sit it before him then return to my room without a word. Why he hasn't sent me to a psych ward yet, I don't know.

While I'm eating, my phone buzzes on the bedside table. I already know who it is before I even look. When I see Jace's text telling me good morning and asking what I'd like to do today, I sigh. He probably thinks I'm still sleeping so I can get away with not responding for a while. However, I don't want to see him today.

No, that's not quite right. I know it's best not to see him because I can't deal with anyone today. I'm irritable and moody and on edge, it won't do either of us any good. If Olivia or Sonya were here they would argue against that, state that I need to talk to Jace because who else am I meant to talk to? But...

But what? Why don't I want to?

Because it will further cement what he is. Because it will further prove how close we've become. Because I will be revealing parts of my life that are a secret to basically everyone to someone who means more to me than I'm willing to admit.

Because I'm scared that he'll leave me too?

The sound of my fork scraping the plate makes me wince. Quickly, I sit it all on my bedside table so I can furiously run my fingers through my hair. That thought sure made my heart race in ways I wish it wouldn't. Suddenly, it feels hot in the room, like I ran a marathon and all the heat that was produced got trapped around me.

I'm an idiot. I'm acting like a fucking idiot. What the hell is wrong with me? Scared he'll leave me? What kind of bogus is that? Of course we'll break up one day. We're in high school, well, he is and I'm just starting college. There's so much of our life left that we're bound to end this relationship before it even really begins so who cares?!

Right?

The ringing of my phone makes me swing my head to the side so fast my neck cracks. I hiss at the feeling, rubbing my slightly sore neck while leaning over to inspect who's calling. I'm shocked to see that it's Jace because normally he doesn't call so early in the morning.

I suppose it has been, holy shit, 30 minutes since he messaged me. Was I thinking for that long? I need some help.

His call makes me a little concerned so I answer a bit hesitant, "Hello?"

"Hey," Jace's voice sounds soft but not like his usual self. It's hard to explain. "Did I wake you?"

"No, I was eating breakfast," I answer, curious to why he's calling and why he sounds so off.

Jace hums, our conversation ending before it even began. There's a tension in the room without him even being here and it makes me squirm.

"Olivia messaged me-"

"You have her number?" When the hell did that happen and why was I not informed?

"On facebook."

"You still use facebook?" I bet he doesn't have any other social media.

"Mylo," Jace sighs, his voice telling me that whatever he wants to discuss is serious and it makes me even more curious. What the hell did Olivia say to him? "Olivia told me Sonya picked you up early from work yesterday."

That traitor.

I clear my throat, my legs crossing on the bed while I grip my ankle with my unoccupied hand. "I left a little early, yeah."

"Sonya was telling her you were pretty upset–"

Shit. I should have called a fucking uber or something.

"–why didn't you tell me? I would have came and got you. You didn't even tell me anything was wrong and they don't know what happened but...why didn't you just ask me to come get you?"

"They're overreacting," I answer, desperately trying to respond without really giving a clear answer. "I just left early because Korey didn't need–"

"Bullshit."

My eyes go wide. Jace doesn't interrupt and certainly not with a curse word in such a serious tone. "Is this really Jace on the phone or are you an imposter with an impeccable way to mimic voices?"

"Mylo, why do you do this?"

"Do what?"

"Try to keep what's bothering you bottled up like it's going to fix anything," Jace answers without any hesitation and, honestly, he kind of hit the nail on the head. "You did this with Mackenzie, didn't it cause more issues than solve them?"

I mean, yes but...when he points it out like that I feel even worse. I know I'm an idiot and I'm acting dumb. It's obvious what I should do but, just because it's obvious doesn't mean that it's easy. Why does the world act like doing the right thing is the easiest thing? If anything, it's the hardest one, that's why it's right.

"I'm coming over," he says in such a stern tone that I am starting to believe my imposter theory.

"I won't let you in."

"I'll wait outside the door all day."

"Seriously, don't come over," I order, already panicking at the idea of it.

"I'll see you soon." Jace hangs up without giving me a chance to argue, again. I'm left sitting on the bed with my phone resting against my ear, completely still while my mind is in panic mode.

Shit. What am I going to do? I could leave but, my car is at Korey's. That doesn't matter, I can take the bus, get to Korey's and grab my car then drive off into the sunset to spend my day doing nothing in order to avoid Jace. How much of a dick move would that be though?

He's coming over because he's concerned and, sure, I get it. If I were in his position I would feel the same way. However, I don't want to talk. How

many times have I said that? I've lost count but the feeling remains, I don't want to talk about any of it so...I'm not going to.

I jump out of bed with haste, throw on some clothes, grab my camera and walk out of the apartment. My dad is asking where I'm going but I'm out the door before he finishes his question. My steps are quick to the elevator and out the front doors until I reach the nearest bus stop. To be honest, I have no idea which one to take to Korey's so I hop on the first one just in order to get away before Jace arrives.

As I'm sitting in one of the seats I can't help but to laugh. How childish am I to run away from my boyfriend simply because he wants to talk? I bet most people would kill to have someone care enough to do that yet I'm running at the mere idea of it. I'm acting like a spoiled brat and I know it. Even with such thoughts, it doesn't make me turn back.

I get off a few stops down and just walk around. Luckily it's a nice day out. It isn't so hot that it's making me feel like I'm going to melt. It's the perfect summer day, which means people are out and I take advantage of that. Removing the hairband from my wrist, I tie up the mess that is my hair and soon my camera is on.

I realize that it's so much easier to speak with complete strangers. Asking for their permission to get some pictures, talking about our days, it's so easy because it isn't personal. They know nothing about me. I know nothing about them. There's no connection other than the quick pictures I take and that's it.

I wonder what that says about me.

It doesn't take long for Jace to try and contact me again. My phone is going off in my back pocket. When his name dances across the screen I simply ignore it, turn everything on silent and slip it back into my pocket. Wow, I have reached a whole new tier of asshole. Sometimes I really do hate myself.

And that is how my phone remains, completely ignored for the next few hours. I have no idea where I'm headed because my feet are moving on their

own. Whatever looks like it'll make a good picture becomes my next target. However, after a little more than an hour I decide that I better go get my car. I'll probably hit up the park, maybe drive out of the city a bit.

I have to google the bus route to get to Korey's. It's been so long since I've taken it that I've forgotten but it clicks once I see the map. After that, I hop onto the right bus and patiently wait the next ten minutes until I arrive. Jumping off the bus, I take a short walk to Korey's parking lot expecting to find my car. I find it, however, that's not all that's waiting for me.

Jace is sitting on the bench outside Korey's studio. Sitting next to him is a bag from a local market, some sort of fast food and two drinks. He's munching on a burger until he sees me. I wonder how long he's been there. Leaning over, Jace reaches into the bag of food and pulls out a thing of hot fries, waving it wildly in the air for me to see.

My lips really want to smile but I am stubborn and refuse to let them.

When I don't make a move to come over, Jace reaches into the other bag and pulls out what appears to be my meal, some fries and a burger. My stomach immediately growls while my legs start to ache. Not because they're tired but because I am using all my willpower to keep me in place. I'm so freaking hungry all of a sudden and, damn it, he is not coaxing me with food! I refuse!

My determination is shattered when he opens the bag of hot fries and starts to eat them.

I'm walking across the lot and sitting at his side in a matter of seconds, ripping the bag from him along with whatever meal he got for me. It's cold, telling me that he has probably been waiting for some time. I still eat it though while Jace says nothing, only smiles at me in silence, which remains that way the entire time we eat.

However, it isn't the least bit uncomfortable and, in a way, that almost scares me.

~

Just because you would not react the same as Mylo in this situation does not mean he is wrong. If he feels cornered by talking to Jace, then he feels cornered and he needs space. Just because he is aware that he's acting childish that doesn't mean it's unnecessary. Some people need space, time, or something *other than talking* before talking. If that is what helps them then that is what helps them. This has been a PSA, thank you very much.

IMG 016

Jace isn't speaking. Neither am I. The empty bag of fast food sits beside us, our garbage resting inside. I'm currently picking at the edge of it, twisting the brown paper, crumpling it and ripping it. What the hell else am I supposed to do? Talk to him? But I've been avoiding that. I don't want to freak out and hurts his feelings, which is what I know I will do if cornered.

I glance to my car. It's close by. I wonder if I could run to it? I roll my eyes at such stupid thoughts then glance at Jace to find him watching me with a soft smile. Seeing that smile makes my stomach flip and I turn away quickly to stare at the bag. It's a beautiful bag, all brown and shit.

Without any warning, Jace takes the bag and sits it aside. The gap between us is closed when he moves over and reaches up to brush a strand of hair out of my face. I pull away, staring at him curiously after he locks it behind my ear. He's smiling but not saying anything while I go on to ask, "What the hell are you doing?"

"Playing with your hair," he responds, twisting the strand around his finger before letting it go to rest his arm on the back of the bench.

"Why?"

"Because I can."

"I never said you could."

"Oh? But you're allowed to grope me in public? I see how it is."

My lips twitch back into a smile without my consent. The action only causes Jace's hazel eyes to sparkle with delight. Why isn't he asking me anything? Why are we just sitting here? Is he waiting for me to speak because that isn't going to happen!

"Let me see your pictures," Jace says, holding out his hand for my camera. I hesitate to do so, holding it in my grasp like I'm worried he'll break it. I know he won't so, with a sigh, I remove the strap from my neck and pass it over.

Jace happily looks through the pictures, clicking through them while pointing out the ones he really likes. We sit there for a while just going through them, not just the ones I took today but older ones as well. The entire time he's saying how good they are and I'm left flushing like a mad man next to him. It's not like I'm not confident in my pictures. I know they're good, people have said so before but hearing it from Jace...it's different.

The longer we sit here simply spending time together the more curious I become. Isn't he annoyed with me? I ran off to avoid talking to him so why isn't he yelling at me or telling me how immature I am? Jace hasn't made any mention of how he had to sit here for over an hour waiting for me. How the hell did he even know to wait here? I bet Sonya told him but, what if he waited and I never showed up?

"Are you crazy?" I inquire causing Jace to look at me with an expression of confusion. "What if you waited here all day and I never came?"

"Then I would have waited all day." Jace shrugs like it's no big deal.

"Wouldn't that...bother you?"

"Not really."

This kid is insane and he has to see it through my expression because he starts to chuckle.

"What?" He asks, throwing his arm around my shoulders this time. My cheeks heat up when he leans forward, close enough that one little movement could result in a kiss. There are people on the street passing by but it seems no one cares about the two teenagers looking ready to make out on a bench.

"Would it bother you if you waited all day for me?" Jace asks and, honestly, I don't even need to think about that.

"Fuck yeah."

Jace snorts and pulls away, shaking his head while I go on to explain, "If you think I would wait more than fifteen minutes, you're crazy. It is a privilege to spend time with me. My time is precious and cannot be wasted."

Jace's shoulders are shaking with laughter. His hand tightens on my shoulder, the action causing me to glance over at said hand. I'm not sure why it fascinates me to see it but it does. Then I feel a soft kiss against my cheek causing me to face Jace once again but he has already pulled away. My cheeks are on fire now.

"What was that for?"

"Do I really need a reason for everything?"

"Well, I mean–" I reach up to pull the tie out of my hair, ruffling it afterwards in confusion. "Why aren't you mad at me?"

"Why would I be?"

"I ran off just to avoid talking to you."

"I'm not mad. I am sorry though."

"Huh?" I give him an incredulous look.

"I figured talking would help and cornered you, made you feel like you had to do it," Jace explains with a frown. "But if time is what you need, I'll give you that."

My heart twists in an almost comforting way. I don't know how to explain it. I've always called myself childish for running off or avoiding a conversation but...Jace is telling me that's ok?

"You mean...if I refuse to talk about something you won't just get annoyed with me?"

"Why would I get annoyed? Not everyone needs to talk the moment shit happens. If you need space to simmer down then go for it but, when you feel ready, I'll be right here." Jace takes my hand, giving it a good squeeze and, somehow, my heart at the same time.

People have always called me annoying or childish for running from my problems. This is the first time someone is saying what it actually is; time. Time that I need to think, even if it isn't always the best. Space, space that I need in order to get my thoughts in order, even if it isn't always the best and I just feel so grateful not to be treated like an idiot, for someone to say they understand and not leave me the moment things get rough.

"I admit, I am curious why you don't want to tell me," Jace says, sounding almost a bit disappointed but not necessarily in me.

Well, that's a great question that has a multitude of answers, each one a little more stupid than the last. It's why I don't respond and instead sit here in silence.

"If it makes you uncomfortable, like I said, we don't have to talk about it now, although, I hope that we eventually do. I don't–" Jace hums, bringing up his opposite hand to rub the back of his neck. "I don't want you to feel like you can't talk to me."

"That's not, uh, it's not...like that?" My response that is more of a question doesn't help, which is clear by the raised brow Jace gives me. I bite my lip, my hands start to fiddle with the camera in my lap.

Fuck, this is why I didn't want to see him. Seeing his puppy dog eyes makes me want to cave instantly but, now, I admit I'm feeling a lot better. It's making me feel like I should talk, which is obviously the right choice but damn it, that doesn't make it easy!

I guess I don't know what to say. I don't know what it is that's bothering me. A lot? My mom? Mackenzie? But, honestly, right now, it's mostly my mom.

I'm not sure if I'm ready to talk about Mackenzie because I feel like it's my own jealousy that refuses to settle down. I don't want Jace to feel like I don't trust him because I do, I really do.

Being on my own has helped. I can tell because it finally feels like I can talk even if I'm scared to. Grumbling, I find myself giving in and spitting out, "I ran into my...my mother yesterday while at work."

"Oh." Jace furrows his brow. He doesn't know much about my parents, only that they split so it's clear he has no idea what kind of impact running into her would have on me.

"We were really close when I was little. She was a stay at home mom so she was always busy with me while dad, well, he was busy with work. Not that he didn't give me all the love and attention in the world because he did. How could he resist this face?" I blink my long eyelashes at Jace, who rolls his eyes in response.

"So what happened?"

I shrug, hesitating to respond because my stomach is in knots. It takes a moment but, eventually, I take a deep breath and say, "She cheated, not that I knew back then. One day I came home from school and all her stuff was gone. I didn't hear from her, she never came to visit, never called, only sent a few cards here or there. I never thought I'd see her again but, I saw her at work. She married the bastard she cheated on my dad with and now they have a son, around the same age I was when she left. It just–"

I shake my head, the anger coursing through me has returned full force. My hands are starting to shake with frustration. "It just aggravated me and, I don't know, I wasn't ready to see her, I guess."

There was much more I could say, probably needed to say but never did. I left it at that, shrugging afterwards once more to show I wasn't going to continue or, rather, I couldn't. If I did, who knew what I would say but I promise none of it would be good.

Feeling Jace pull me flush against his side helps the anger go from a roaring inferno to a simmering flame. My cheeks, however, have taken on the inferno since they are now bright red I'm sure, not that they weren't already.

"Did she try to speak with you?" Jace asks in such a soft tone that I actually feel like I have to answer.

"Sort of."

"And?"

"I got pissy as usual and stormed off."

Jace once again brushes away the strands of hair that have fallen into my face. The feel of his fingertips touching my cheeks makes my toes curl. Why the hell is he so touchy? And why must I like it?!

"That's nothing to be ashamed of. No one can blame you for it, especially with what happened."

"It's whatever. Give me a day, I'll get over it."

"Don't do that," Jace groans, something I said seems to have set him off. He's using the hold on my shoulder to turn me in order to face him. Seeing his stern gaze makes me worried.

"Do what?"

"That. You know I already know what your worst habit is?" He presses his finger against my nose causing me to rub it after his finger retreats. "You act like it's ok when it isn't. If something's bothering you admit that it is. If something upsets you admit that it is, even if it's only to yourself at first. You're blunt, aren't you?"

"It's different," I explain, brushing Jace's hand off my shoulder so I can turn away. "Telling someone I wanna fuck them or that they're an asshole is easy."

"And telling your boyfriend when you're upset or hurting isn't?" Jace almost sounds offended when he says that, which makes me panic.

"No, I said that's–" I run my hands down my face, wondering how we are going in circles. "–just, I can handle it on my own. I don't need to complain or bother–"

"You're not bothering me," Jace interrupts. "You should know by now that nothing you do bothers me."

"Is that a challenge?" I smirk until I look back and find Jace narrowing his gaze. Ok, serious talk apparently means I can't throw a joke in, my bad. "I get it, I get it. I won't do it again."

"Yes you will."

"What about you then?" I ask, finding Jace's gaze hardening almost immediately. "Do you tell me everything that bothers you?"

Jace crosses his arms, his eyes falling to stare at the ground. "Touche."

"I thought you'd at least hesitate to admit it." Or more like I wanted him to. I guess I can see how it hurts to know that Jace possibly has something bothering him that he isn't telling me. Not that I can be much help, I'm pretty shit at making others feel better unless it's in the physical sense.

"The anniversaries coming up," Jace whispers so quietly that I barely catch it. However, the moment I do, the rest of the world seems to fade from existence. The solemn expression on Jace's face is so out of place that I can say with 100% certainty that I've never seen it before...and I don't want to see it again.

I hum to show I'm listening, unsure of whether I'm meant to ask how it's going or if it's better to just let him say it.

"It feels like we're all walking on eggshells at the house," Jace mumbles more to himself than me. "I don't like looking at the calendar or hearing

how close the end of summer is. It's like, if I don't see it or hear it then the anniversary will never get here. Does that sound stupid?"

I shake my head at the questioning gaze Jace is giving me.

"Not at all," I answer, hell, with me it was the same when my mom left so I can't imagine how painful it is for Jace. "Um...if you need to talk or need to be alone or something, just let me know."

"What if I need a really expensive steak dinner?" Jace grins, his eyes are still dark, telling me that he's likely not feeling all that great yet he can still crack a joke. I guess we both have that problem...but how come he can joke and I can't? Unfair.

Snickering, I shrug and answer, "Mm, I'll think about it."

Jace drops his hands to his sides with a soft chuckle before reaching them up in order to stretch. Maybe I stare at the sliver of his stomach that is revealed while doing so and maybe Jace catches me.

"Seriously?" He laughs, pushing his shirt down to hide it from my view. Damn, it was such a nice view too.

"My goal is to at least get your shirt off by the end of summer."

Jace pinches the bridge of his nose but his smile tells me he totally digs it. I bite my lip while grinning, looking up at Jace while he drops his hand into his lap. Seeing his eyes return to their natural shine makes me feel like I've accomplished something.

"Come on," he says, standing up then holding his hand out for me to take.

"Where are we going?" I ask while taking that hand, my heart thumping loudly when his fingers interlock with mine.

"My house."

"Huh?"

"What? You don't want to come over?" He is tugging me towards his car and, the freaking bastard, turns around just before we reach it to say, "My grandparents aren't home."

Excuse me? Did he say what I think he just said? If this is some kind of test of will then I will fail that shit, happily.

"Are you trying to make me attack you? Because I'll do it."

Jace pushes me towards the passenger side without a word. It's then, while I'm sliding into the car, that I realize I came all this way to get my car yet I'm still leaving in his. Whatever, I'll get it later. Right now, I'm honestly a little curious as to why we're going to Jace's house and, well, I do want to see it.

Plus if his grandparents aren't actually home then there is a chance for some hanky panky and I am down for that! The question is, is Jace? Surely he isn't inviting me over with purely innocent thoughts in mind. You can't do that when there is no supervision.

This is clearly a set up and I wonder what Jace has in mind. Maybe I'm getting my hopes up and this is purely an innocent visit to him. If it is, I won't be disappointed, which is kind of sad to admit.

Shit, I'm in deep and it doesn't seem like I'll be getting out any time soon.

~

Last chapter I expected some hate on Mylo and I wrote this while guessing what people would say. I was a little proud how spot on I was but I wanted to make sure everyone is aware what Mylo was doing and how Jace feels about it. Anyways, do you understand why it's so important that Jace is telling Mylo he'll give him space? Do you understand why some people need it before talking? Some said you are like Mylo and run off first, do you feel it's for the same reasons? Let me know!

IMG 017

The drive to Jace's house is silent save for the radio but it is no way awkward. There's no tension or discomfort, not even when Jace catches me (a couple times) staring at him like a weirdo during the drive. Each time he glances at me, he smiles, just smiles. The simplest of actions yet it makes my heart race and, fuck, it needs to stop.

If all Jace does is smile and it makes me act like this then...I'm going to die. Give me another month and my heart will give out. He needs to stop being so damn cute all the time. I'm going to have to...I don't know, do something. See? Even my thoughts don't make sense. I'm doomed!

We pull into the parking lot of Jace's home, which is a bit further out of the city and into the suburbs. The place is adorable to say the least with a cute front yard that his grandparents obviously take care of judging by all the flowers blooming by the fence and around the porch. It's a two story home, very similar to the others around it but the soft orange of the house makes it stand out.

"Sorry it isn't as grand as your apartment," Jace says, which has me shaking my head immediately. Honestly, if someone asked which place I liked better, I would pick this one.

"No, it's...it's really nice." I step onto the cobble stone path leading to the porch. Even the sidewalk is adorable with circular stones set in the rocks leading to the porch. "It's homey."

When Jace realizes I'm not following him, he reaches out to take my hand. Once my hand is safely wrapped within his, he pulls me forward, up the steps and to the front door. With my hand still in his, he unlocks the door and allows me to go in first. The moment I do all I feel is warm. A sort of warm comfort that reminds me of Jace so it must be a family thing. I've never met his grandparents but judging by the atmosphere of his home I'll probably like them.

I take my shoes off and leave them at the door alongside Jace's. He asks me if I'd like a drink to which I shake my head but I do peek around the downstairs some. There are plenty of pictures all over the place, ones that are clearly of his grandparents in their youth and others of Jace in his. I immediately notice one where he can't be older than 8 but it seems Jace doesn't want me to see it.

"Come on," he orders quickly, dragging me up the stairs while I'm snickering.

"Oh, let me see the pictures!" I whine, dragging my feet a bit in the hall atop the stairs.

Jace ignores me, choosing to drag me to his bedroom, which I'm not complaining about. I'm simply saying that I want to get some good info while I'm here. If he wishes to give me some more *pleasurable* information then I'm all for that. I was trying to keep it innocent earlier by asking about some pictures but, hey, Mr. Horny over here is causing this, not me! Not my fault!

We're in Jace's room in no time and I'm not even surprised to find the walls are blue. I give him credit for having some posters up of athletes, mostly wrestlers, along with movies and musicians, many of which I've never heard of. I make a mental note to ask to watch them later, I don't mind reading subtitles and, y'know, if Jace is interested then...I wanna know.

Fuck, I'm so bad.

"Wrestling huh?" I gesture to the few pictures that are clearly of wrestlers. I'm almost jealous that he has pictures of partially naked dudes on his walls. They're getting torn down later. "Sweaty men groping each other in tights, yes, the straightest of sports. I should have signed up."

Jace snorts and ignores my joke. Rude.

"Bienvenido," He says, holding out his arms to show off his room, which is similar to my own. There's a TV mounted on the wall, gaming consoles, video games, books, movies, school supplies and dirty clothes. Upon seeing

that his dirty clothes are just laying in the open for me to see, some of which being his boxers, Jace jumps at them.

I snicker while he desperately tries to clean it all up, tossing it into his laundry basket while sputtering, "I, well, this wasn't the original plan and–"

"What was the original plan?" I ask, taking a seat on his bed, which probably isn't the best idea considering that I am officially surrounded by Jace.

His room, his bed, his clothes, there's a mixture of the smell of his cologne along with a scent that is uniquely him in the air. It makes my skin break out with goosebumps and I am 100% ok with admitting that my thoughts are anything but pure at the moment. If he expects otherwise, he doesn't know me very well.

Jace shrugs after successfully cleaning his room of the dirty clothes. Some clean ones are hanging out of his drawers but he doesn't seem to care much about those. Taking a seat next to me, our shoulders brush, which only makes my senses go even crazier. He best backup if he doesn't want anything to happen.

"I thought we would be at your place but you decided to run off."

Oh, right.

"Sorry," I apologize, digging my sock clad toes into the carpet. Jace does the same, even moving his foot over to knock playfully against my own. We continue this and it makes my fingers curl tightly into the sheets.

"It's all right," Jace says with a shrug, the movement causing our shoulders to brush again. "You're pretty predictable."

I smack his thigh for that making the boy let out a soft chuckle that's like music to my ears. I almost hate it because I'm not used to the feelings that only seem to grow inside me. It's a bit frightening.

But those thoughts are put on hold when I feel Jace's hand against my cheek. With little effort, he pushes my head to turn in order to face him. There's a blush on my cheeks, I know it but, I'm not the only one blushing.

The moment our eyes meet I know that I was in no way getting my hopes up earlier. There's almost a questioning look in his eyes but he doesn't need to ask to know my answer.

Our lips are pressed together in an instant. A soft and tender kiss that lasts all of a second. Feeling his tongue eagerly pry open my lips informs me that, this time, we're on the same page. There's no time to process what's happening before Jace's hand is curling into my hair, angling our heads for a deeper kiss that allows his tongue to drive me completely mad.

Soft moans escape my throat that only escalate to an almost pleading groan when our kiss comes to an end, only for Jace's lips to start cascading down my throat. The soft nips of his teeth makes my heart flutter and when he finds a particularly interesting spot Jace lingers there long enough to leave a mark. I am in no way complaining, he can leave as many as he wants so long as he doesn't stop.

I can actually feel my heart jumping into my throat. It's beating so loud I fear Jace may hear. If he does, he doesn't mention it. The only sound he makes is an incredibly intoxicating groan when I put myself in a more pleasurable position.

He doesn't expect me to throw myself into his lap but I do and I'm quickly leaning back in for another kiss, taking his bottom lip between my teeth while my hands push up beneath his shirt. My dull nails lightly tickle his chest and, on the tip of my fingers, I can feel the goosebumps on his skin. It's a relieving sensation, knowing that our bodies are in tune, shivering and aching for more.

My goal for the summer is achieved when Jace helps me to remove his shirt. The sight is a blessing and I would relish in it longer but it appears Jace has a job to do. My shirt quickly follows his own. The moment it's off Jace is kissing my across my collar bone, taking the skin between his teeth to mark. Every little bite or kiss drives me wild and my hips start to rock

against his. The first movement shocks Jace enough to moan, the sound humming against my skin and I learn quickly that I very much enjoy it so I mimic the action.

Over and over I roll our hips together, my hands holding onto his shoulders for leverage while Jace pants and moans against me. His hands are slowly running down my back before pushing past my jeans. Feeling his cool hands taking hold of my ass and kneading in tune to my thrusts makes my entire body ache with the need to get off. Should have figured Jace was somehow a complete sexual frustration in bed. Hell, he doesn't even have all his clothes off and I'm frustrated! We need to fix that.

Once again, I shock Jace by pulling away. His hands slip out of my jeans when I push back and get to my knees before him. His eyes are wide upon seeing my fingers start to work on unzipping his pants. I'm very interested in the tent that's forming so if he could get rid of the barrier, that would be wonderful.

"M-Mylo, what are you doing?" Jace asks completely breathless. He seems a little hesitant with my plan, his hand grasping my wrist to keep me from succeeding.

I look up at the boy with a confused expression. "Baby, you know what I'm doing."

He may be able to sweet talk. He may get me to blush but we're in my territory now. When it comes to sex, I'm in no way shy. The dark red on his cheeks builds, while sweat drips down his heaving chest, the way his eyes are filled with lust, something I've never seen before, it only coaxes me to continue. So, before Jace can try to argue, I decide the best way to get what I want is make Jace realize how badly he needs to finish.

Jace lets out something along the lines of a whimper when the hand that he is holding starts to massage him through his jeans. With the added friction Jace's entire body stiffens, his hips denying him and quickly thrusting into my hand. I continue this, next allowing my mouth to run over the obvious bulge in his pants. His hand is off my wrist and twisting into my hair in a

second. It's a bit painful but it's worth it when Jace's hips continue to thrash with need.

"Ok, ok," Jace gives in pretty quickly, not that I expected him to last long. Who the hell says no to a blow job? Honestly, he's too nice. I wouldn't have even stopped him if he offered.

Grinning, I continue on my quest to remove Jace of all the useless clothes. He lifts himself off the bed, allowing me to pull off his jeans that are, thankfully, not skinny jeans and slide right off along with his boxers. I am in no way disappointed and realize that, after this moment, I may have to kill anyone who tries to touch him.

"No one else is allowed to see you naked," I say like it's an order, which has Jace staring at me with a mixture of confusion and *"hurry the fuck up I'm horny."* I'm not sure how someone can say that with a look but he's pulling it off well.

Before Jace can come up with a response, if he even can, I grip the base of his cock, his hips jerk from the sudden touch. I know I'm a bit of an ass for slowly working my hand up and down his shaft while placing tender kisses to the inside of his thigh but, damn, it's nice hearing him swear.

"F-Fuck, Mylo."

"Something wrong, Jace?" I ask, making sure my warm breath drifts over his sensitive skin. While Jace bites his lip to hold back a groan, my hand quickens its pace, his hips trying to move in tune but my arm over his waist is keeping him from doing so. His skin is warm and enticing, so are the soft mewls that leave his lips every so often. I'm eager to hear more.

Finally, I grip his base while slipping my lips over him. Feeling the warm flesh between my lips makes me shiver. Hearing my name roll of his tongue each time my tongue brushes his tips makes me moan and causes the own heat between my thighs to become almost painful. Jace's thighs widen, coaxing me closer while his hips shake against the bed.

I move my arm, my hand pressing against his open thigh while my thumb caresses the quivering leg beneath it. Jace seems lost to any idea other than thrusting into the heat of my mouth. I suppose not having a gag reflex has it perks, like allowing Jace's hips to move as they please. The sound of his moans fill the air, each one encouraging me to move faster while my hand works on his base. The air is hot or it may just be the heat between Jace's thighs. When Jace twists his fingers into my hair again I know that he's close. His thighs are shaking beside me and, oddly enough, I can feel my own orgasm about to hit. Jace's thrusts are becoming more jerky and, after a particular suck of his tip, he lets out far more than a sweet moan. I don't stop sucking him off until his hips are back on the bed and his orgasm is spent.

Pulling away, I look up at him to find his face completely flushed. His chest is heaving, hair sticking to the side of his head with sweat while his entire body is shaking from his orgasm. My own is close, it's practically painful at this point, and it seems Jace has enough energy to help because he grabs my arm and tugs as if to tell me to get up. I do, my legs nearly giving out until Jace pulls me into his lap and moves my jeans down just enough to get to what he wants.

Feeling his hand around my cock makes me moan. It's the first touch I've received and I already feel like I'm finished. Quickly, I bury my face into his shoulder while my hips thrust into his hand that's desperately trying to get me off. The feeling is pure euphoria, hot fire running through my veins from Jace's touch. Even feeling his lips against my lip, kissing me like he can't get enough makes it even better. It doesn't take me long seeing as I've been on the brink for a while and when my orgasm finally hits me all I can moan is his name while he presses tender kisses against my shoulder over and over until the tenderness almost hurts.

We're both sweaty and now sticky messes thanks to me. The room smells of sweat but not shame I promise that. However, I can't bring myself to look at Jace after that...that...absolutely wonderful adult play time. If I knew coming to visit would get his pants off I would have come much sooner.

"We should probably clean up," Jace suggests, pressing the side of his head against my own. Feeling the heat makes my entire body shiver and, if he

keeps it up, we're going for round two.

"If you don't get dressed, there will be another go," I threaten, which has Jace chuckling. His breath cools my burning skin.

After a few moments of the two of us catching our breath, Jace taps my side to tell me to get up. I nod and do just that, quickly pulling my pants back on while staring at everything Jace has to offer. Fuck, he's hot. Blessed. I've been blessed.

"Must you stare?" Jace asks while grabbing some tissues from the bedside table to clean off his chest. He hands some to me as well and yes, I'm still staring.

"It was in my mouth most of the time so I didn't get that good of a look," I answer with a grin that only has Jace's cheeks returning to a flaming red. I really like it when they do that.

"Oh, are you getting shy?" I tease, stepping forward to stop him from putting any clothes back on. I run my hand down his chest lower and lower until he grips my wrist and pulls them back up. "What? I can't touch but sucking is ok? I mean, if you insist–"

I'm about to get back on my knees but he's pushing me towards the door. Damn it, I'll get a round two out of him eventually. Jace tosses some clean clothes into my hands too but there's amusement in his tone when he says, "The bathroom is across the hall."

"We aren't showering together?"

"I don't trust you."

"Please, you were enjoying what my mouth was doing earlier so–"

He shuts his bedroom door but I don't hear a lock so I could go back in. Is he testing me? Because I've already failed the test before if that's what they were. He shouldn't expect much from me!

Rolling my eyes, I do as I was told, skipping across the hall to get that shower. I definitely need it to cool me off because remaining in Jace's bedroom where that...well, that wonderful experience happened isn't going to help keep me calm down.

The shower is a cold one for obvious reasons. Although I do end up standing beneath the spray of water for a moment after realizing that now I'm going to smell like Jace. I'm using all his bathroom supplies and I'll be wearing his borrowed clothes in a moment. Shit, I'm going to get a boner even with a cold shower. We're going for round two, it's happening.

After I step out and start to dry off, I hear voices outside the door. His grandparents must be home so I end up rushing to pull on the borrowed clothes. Jace hasn't had the time to clean up and, while there isn't too much evidence of our alone time, it's better to be safe than sorry. With the towel still on my head ruffling my wet locks, I open the door except it isn't Jace's grandparents I see standing in his doorway.

Looking back at me is a beautiful girl...with red hair, blue eyes and freckles. She's short with an hourglass figure that I thought was only in heavily photoshopped magazines. With that bright smile of hers, she gives off an air of charm and beauty that makes my insides crumble.

And, when I glance to Jace, I realize who she is.

"Oh, you must be Mylo," she says, the sound of her voice makes my chest ache. With a cute wave, she introduces herself and, somehow, manages to ruin everything. "It's nice to meet you. I'm Mackenzie."

~

Just gonna put this here cause I know what will happen, please, no Mackenzie hate. She literally only showed up so, y'know, don't hate a girl for simply existing.

Well ,that didn't go as planned, did it? ;)

IMG 018

"Nice to meet you," I find myself almost whispering, my eyes landing on Jace's panicked expression. His eyes are wide and movements jerky when he grabs Mackenzie's arm and tugs in order to get me away from her.

Oh, don't want me near her, huh? Understandable. Don't want us to meet, don't want me near her, of course not, why would he? This is a catastrophe waiting to happen or it is a catastrophe that's currently happening, depends on how you look at it.

"Jace told us about you," Mackenzie says, completely oblivious to the cold atmosphere that's getting worse with each passing second. Feeling her eyes on me makes me want to claw my own skin off. "You're going to Toho University, right?"

I nod, doing my best to fake a smile. I fear if I speak my words may come out with obvious annoyance. It takes me a few moments to compose myself, well, kind of compose myself.

"Cool, so am I! We should look over our schedules some time, if there's a professor that we shared I could give you my notes or some pointers if you'd like!" Mackenzie suggests, nodding enthusiastically at her idea that if we met under different circumstances I would thank her repeatedly for.

Sadly, my frustration is at an all time high while my thoughts are swirling like a tsunami. It's hard to focus on anything other than my own internal screaming. There comes a point when a person is thinking so much that they aren't thinking anything at all. While I can't comprehend a single word, somehow, my mind is still screaming them over and over like a broken record that's on full blast.

"Yeah, I would really appreciate that," I manage to respond although Jace seems quick to notice my tone. Of course he is, judging by the way he's biting his bottom lip, he knows that my thoughts are anything but good. His

hands are actually shaking a bit, so are mine but for a different reason, I'm sure.

Mackenzie presses her hand to Jace's arm and my initial instinct is to rip it off. Luckily my body is frozen in place and there is no dismemberment today...at least not of Mackenzie. Jace, on the other hand, he may feel some wrath later.

"I was passing through, thought I'd stop and ask if Jace wanted to see a movie but, since someone is over, I can–"

"No, it's fine," I interrupt causing Mackenzie to smile while Jace goes completely blank.

What the hell am I meant to do? Stand here and take it? Maybe it's the way they look, the fact that when I see them side-by-side they look so good together. It's a silly thought, one that I used to have before I came out. Yet here it is again, back with a vengeance and it's tearing me a new one. I can't handle it or the feelings bubbling in my gut. There's too much at once and I have to get the hell out of here.

After tossing my towel into the dirty laundry hamper in the bathroom, I return my attention to the two before me and say in a sweet tone, "I should be heading home. You two can have fun. It would be a pity for Jace to say no to an offer from such a pretty girl."

Mackenzie giggles while Jace, he shows me a sight I've never seen before.

He glares, actually *glares* at me. The way his brow is furrowed, the tension in his shoulders, it's unfamiliar and the fact that it's directed at me hurts in ways that no words could possibly describe it.

So, I do the only thing I can and send Mackenzie a quick smile followed by a soft goodbye before heading to the stairs. I'm at the door and pulling on my shoes before Jace even makes it down the steps. He's calling for me but I'm out the door, heading for the nearest bus stop, which I have no clue where it's at but we'll get there when we get there!

I don't stop walking even after a hand grabs my arm. The moment it does, I pull away with a snarl but no words. I just keep moving without turning back.

"Mylo, stop! Where are you going?" Jace asks, reaching for my hand this time, which I quickly smack away but he doesn't give up. With a few quick steps, Jace gets in front of me and grabs me by the shoulders to keep me in place.

You bet I knock his hands right off and take a few steps back to keep a distance from him. He's still glaring and it still fucking hurts and I'm not in the mood for it. Why the hell did he follow me? Isn't it obvious that I know what's up now? He doesn't honestly think he can talk me into going back with him.

"I'm going to get my car then head home," I answer in a quivering voice that says I am a second away from shouting.

"Please, stay," Jace pleads, stepping towards me but I make sure to take two back. When he sees that, he freezes in place, his teeth coming out to bite at his bottom lip.

"Why should I?"

Jace doesn't answer and it only makes me realize that I'm not overthinking it. I never was. Prank the prankster, that's what I said in the beginning. I wish I would have done a better job so we wouldn't have even gotten to this point.

"You realize that she could be my fucking sister, right?" I ask.

"Mylo, that's ridiculous--" he tries, brows furrowed and head shaking.

"Whatever, I can say that is just a weird coincidence, however, let's go over the rest of my list, shall we? I heard from a little birdie that all the girls you dated before felt you were in love with someone else."

"No," he whispers, staring at me with eyes that are begging me to stop, but I don't.

"Then there's all the calls and the messages, ok, I'll give you that too. You're both hurting, I get it, seriously. But that ridiculous love stricken face you've made each time...hiding her from me to begin with, acting like you weren't talking to anyone, it all leads back to Mackenzie. The girl that you don't want me to go near, the girl that you clearly didn't want me to meet–"

"That's--that's not it, Mylo. You're misunderstanding, and I understand why. It's my fault," Jace interrupts with a shaking tone; holding out his hand like he expects me to take it. I sure as hell don't.

He drops it back to his side when I hiss at him, "It's not? Fine, I'll humor you again and say that it's not, but first you can answer this. Are you in love with her?"

"No, no, not..."

"Not anymore?" I finish for him. His mouth hangs open, then shuts, never forming words. His shoulders cave around him. While I can see the guilt and can completely understand it, the pain eating away at my chest is so frustrating that I can't bring myself to feel bad about it.

"You can keep dating in hopes to get over her. That's how most people get in relationships, right? Hell, I've gone out after a shit break up to hopefully find someone new, but... but I'm not going to be her replacement. I'm just not."

I walk away.

Jace doesn't follow and I don't look back.

Each step I take feels heavier than the last but I keep moving until I happen to stumble upon a bus stop. I have no idea what route to take back to Korey's but thank god for google. It's easy to look it up and I'm on the bus that will take me there in no time.

It's strange how calm I am. My hands aren't shaking. I'm not sweating. My legs are still. Sitting on the bus, all I do is stare ahead with my body swaying along with the movement of the vehicle. There's nothing going in my head, no words, complete silence all the way to Korey's. Even when I get into my car, I don't feel anything and I'm not sure why.

It isn't until I make it home that I realize, the issue isn't that I'm not feeling anything. The issue is that I'm feeling too much to process it.

It's sudden, the bombardment of feelings overtaking me the moment I step into the elevator. Luckily no one is there and when a cry manages to work its way up my throat, the only one who hears it is me. Yet I still try to cover my mouth to silence it, biting my own tongue while clenching my eyes shut in hopes to keep back everything that wants to overflow.

The doors open on my floor, someone walks in and I have no clue if they notice my behavior. Even if they do, they don't care and I rush to my door. It's actually difficult to unlock, my now trembling hands struggle to do so and the world is growing blurry. Somehow, I manage to open the door, kicking off my shoes while I try to bolt to my room.

My dad's in the living room and, although I hear his voice, I don't bother him with a glance. The only thing on my mind is getting to my room and the moment I do, the door is slammed shut and, suddenly, it's never been harder to keep anything in. I've always been the type to keep my troubles silent. I'm the type to take the heavy burden, let it sit on my shoulders and never say a word so hearing the soft cries that I can't seem to stop irritates me in ways I can't explain.

It's infuriating and I'm acting like a child, grabbing a pillow from my bed so I can scream every curse word imaginable into it. Each insult is directed at Jace and not a single one makes me feel the least bit better so I go for a different route and scream at me for everything.

For being an idiot. For being naive. For honestly believing for a moment that Jace might feel the same. I was a fool. I am a fool. And fools are always left with disappointment.

"Mylo?" A voice calls from behind me, my entire body freezing when I realize that my dad has caught me during a moment of weakness.

Quickly, I drop the pillow onto my bed and take a deep breath in hopes to calm myself. It doesn't work so I desperately attempt to wipe the tears from my cheeks. It pisses me off that I'm even crying, which makes me want to cry more for some reason.

"Y-Yeah, dad?" I ask in a shaking tone.

"Are you all right?"

"Fine, I'm fine," I lie, trying not to sniffle but seeing as the only other option is to eat my own snot I am forced to do so. The sound, obviously, doesn't help my dad believe me.

My dad rests his hand on my shoulder when he asks, "What happened?"

"Nothing, I'm fine," I reiterate, shrugging his hand off while trying to walk past him without showing my face.

Sadly, that doesn't happen because my dad grabs me by the shoulders and gently pushes me back so he can look me in the eye. The moment he does I know there's no excuse I can give for why my eyes are so red or why I likely look like I just had my heart ripped out of my chest then fucked with a chainsaw.

There's obvious concern dancing in his eyes but he doesn't ask what happened again. Instead, he reaches up to press his hands against my cheeks. My cheeks warm when he brushes the tears away and I'm not really sure what I'm meant to do.

My dad has his arms around me in a second then pulls me into his chest and says, "It's ok to be upset, Mylo. What ever happened, if you need to cry about it, if you need to shout or curse or throw a fit, it's ok."

I break.

It's like every single thing in my life that has frustrated me comes all at once and I'm nothing but a mumbling, sniffling, hiccuping mess in my dad's arm. His shirt is soaked in less than a minute but he doesn't pull away. Feeling his hand combing through my hair, hearing him hum and repeat "it'll be ok" somehow makes it feel like it will be ok. It's fucking ridiculous how some parents can make everything better with a few words and I never realized how much I needed to hear it until I did.

How long we stand there, I haven't the foggiest but it's enough that I can finally calm down. My breathing has returned to normal and my tears have stopped but dad's still holding me and, damn it, I'm not moving either. When was the last time we had anything like this? He's never here and I'm, well, I never tell him when something's wrong. I guess we've both got our problems.

"Boys fucking suck," I blurt out causing my dad to laugh. "I'm gonna be straight."

"I'm of the belief that everyone sucks equally."

Hearing that makes me chuckle and it's then that my dad pulls back enough to look down at me. Seeing that I am no longer a mess he sends me a kind smile that I happily return.

"Listen, Mylo, I know that...I know I'm always busy and I'm not around–"

"Dad," I try to interrupt but he pats my back as if to ask that I let him finish.

"But if something is bothering you, I'm here. I'm not the best role model and, honestly, most of the time I don't know what I'm doing but...don't try to take on the world alone, ok?"

I could easily make a joke but choose not to, actually, I can't bring myself to do anything other than nod. I have reached my emotional limit for the day. Exhaustion is setting in and dad knows it. He presses a chaste kiss to my forehead before telling me to get some rest. I'm not arguing with that because I feel like I could sleep for eternity.

While I feel better I know that won't last forever. I'm quick to grab my phone with every intention to get a hold of Olivia or Sonya. We need to hang out tomorrow to keep my mind off Jace but that probably won't even work. The moment I look at my phone all I see is Jace.

His missed calls. His voicemails. His texts. He's sent a good many, which is odd for Jace since he has always been the type to wait patiently for a response. This time, it seems, he's desperate for me to reply...but I don't. I erase every voicemail without listening to it, delete every text and quickly change my screensaver from our first kiss to an adorable cat in a witch costume.

Next, my phone is shut off. If someone wants to get a hold of me then tough shit. I'm going to bed anyways so it's not like it needs to be on. I even hide the damn thing so I won't even see if...but none of it really helps. Although I manage to pass out the moment I get into bed, I wake up later that evening with one thing on my mind.

Jace.

Whether it's how furious I am or how stupid I feel about getting mad at him, it's all on him. Every thought, every feeling and it frustrates me to the point that, once again, I grab my pillow from behind my head and scream into it. It's all I can do to keep myself from grabbing my phone, calling him and...

And what?

Talk? Forgive him? Ask him to explain? Cuss him out? Tell him to go to hell? I don't know because I want to do all those things but nothing at the same time.

Fuck.

It wasn't supposed to be like this. I was never supposed to like Jace...

Like him.

My fingers dig into the fabric of my pillow that's slowly suffocating me and I'm kind of ok with it after realizing what I just thought.

I was never supposed to like Jace. Now my own thoughts can't even pretend like that isn't the case. Great, exactly what I needed right now, my mind reminding me just how much...just how much I actually do like him and how much this all fucking sucks.

I guess Olivia was right. I should have been more careful so some dumb boy didn't end up breaking my heart.

~

***screams into the void* NOT ALL RED HEADS LOOK ALIKE! NOT ALL BLONDES LOOK ALIKE! BASIC FEATURES DO NOT MAKE PEOPLE LOOK THE SAME! AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, PEOPLE HAVE TYPES! SOME LIKE BLONDE HAIR, SOME LIKE BLUE EYES, SOME LIKE DARK HAIR AND LIGHT EYES AND THAT'S FUCKING FINE! PLEASE CONSIDER WHY MYLO IS COMPARING HIMSELF TO MACKENZIE! MAYBE THERE IS SOME PSYCHOLOGY INVOLVED!**

IMG 019

The next morning Jace continues to haunt me. When I check my phone there are even more messages, more calls waiting for a response. After having time to cool off over the night I feel a little tempted to at least listen. However, when my finger hovers over his voicemail I ask myself if I should.

Do I want to listen simply because I want to forgive him? If that happens and I go running back, what if the issue with Mackenzie is never solved? What if he goes back to her? My feelings only seem to grow every passing day. It will get to the point that I won't be able to handle such a thing happening.

I delete it and I delete the texts although my eyes betray me and read over a few. They're all sweet, none pointing blame or telling me I'm being stupid. Not a single thing is of frustration, only concern and apologies. It makes it even harder to ignore them but I know it's for the best.

The best option is probably to hang out with friends. I know the girls will be more than willing to come over and cheer me up. There will probably be some trash talk in hopes to make me feel better followed by an unhealthy consumption of sugar and chocolate. It sounds wonderful, truly it does but...

I don't feel like doing anything.

There's nothing. Even after sleeping through the night, I'm so tired. My body feels numb but heavy like my limbs turned to lead. The four walls around me suddenly feel so safe while the outside world is a horror. I'm being dramatic, that's how I roll but it's while I'm laying here that I realize we all have these feelings at some point, don't we?

In life, confusion and pain is a given. We all have moments in our lives where the world seems like it's ending. We know we're being dramatic, silly

and childish but we can't help ourselves so we just wallow in our grief in hopes that it will go away on its own.

It never does but sometimes wallowing is necessary. Doesn't mean it's fun but it needs to be done.

So that's what I do.

The following days I go about my business like Jace was never a part of it. I message Sonya and Olivia, refusing to let either of them know about what happened. I do decline a few of their offers to go out but only because I don't feel quite ready for it yet. Any attempts from Jace to get in contact are completely ignored. I'm actually surprised (and a little disappointed) that he never shows up at my house or work but it helps my days go by.

Korey mentions a few times that I'm working harder than usual. It's not a compliment though, more along the lines of concern, which I brush off. Being at work helps keep my mind off Jace so I desperately try to get more hours. Korey can see through me though, she's annoying like that and is quick tell me to "enjoy my summer."

Damn it. Can't she be a normal boss who wants to work me to the bone? Help me out here!

Before I realize it, five days have passed and, once again, I wake up to find Jace's text. It's gotten to the point that he's no longer apologizing but instead trying to make conversation. It's a simple good morning text, asking how I am and what I've been doing.

Again, I'm tempted to answer. I even type out a reply before I catch myself. Quickly, I delete everything and groan, rubbing the palms of my hands against my eyes.

"Mylo, what are you doing?" I hum, dropping my hands to my side, grabbing my phone and deciding, fuck it, I need some company. Being alone is going to make it so much harder to continue ignoring Jace.

Olivia is the first person I call and I'm not surprised when she growls, "Why are you calling so early?"

"Got any plans today?" I ask, flinching at my voice that I didn't mean to sound so...exhausted. Even while half asleep, Olivia can tell there's a problem because she's quick to go from annoyed to concerned.

"Uh, well, Sonya and I were going to see if you and Jace wanted to join some of us at the arcade in the mall."

Hearing Jace's name makes my ears burn.

"Are you ok, Mylo? You sound a little down," Olivia says softly, showing that she isn't trying to force me to answer but she's just concerned. How I got such a nice friend, I don't know but I'm a lucky man.

"I'm...I want to go but Jace, he, uh, well, he and I–fuck." I run my hands through my hair, wondering what the hell I'm doing. We're what? We're broken up? I suppose I never told him that but stating that I won't be Mackenzie's replacement is a pretty sure fire way of saying *we're through* . Plus I haven't responded to him in five days so...yeah, it's probably safe to say that.

"We broke up," I spit the words out like garbage and, like garbage, the words leave a vile taste in my mouth.

"Oh, Mylo...I...I'm sorry, what happened?"

"It's a long story and, honestly, I don't want to talk about it. Whose all going? I need to get my mind off it," I quickly respond, picking at my own comforter. If I keep it up, I'll put holes in it.

"Mostly Sonya's friends from school. I think we're all going out for pizza afterwards, which I know you're interested in."

I moan just thinking about it. "Bitch, you know me so well."

"We'll pick you up at noon, ok?"

"Ok, I'll see you then."

Before I can hang up though, Olivia asks, "Hey, are you sure you don't want to talk about it? It's not like you to sound so troubled over a break up."

"I'm not troubled." I'm doing it again, the very thing my dad told me not to do, the very thing Jace told me that I do. "I'm fine, I'll see you at noon."

I hang up before Olivia can argue since I know that she can tell I am anything but fine. Still, I'm getting out of the house and that's what matters. I'm quick to get dressed even if it's only 9am and I've got three hours. During that time, Jace tries calling me. Seeing his name flashing across my screen is harder to ignore than anything else.

I realize that I'm being stupid by not blocking his number. That's what I should do. I need to if I want to keep myself from falling into his trap. If I block his number, I won't get his messages or calls, everything will be fine. I should do it. I need to block his number.

I don't and I hate myself for it.

The girls arrive a little before noon and I'm sliding into the back of Sonya's car in no time. Although both smile at me when I get in, I can tell they are concerned. It's the way they're holding themselves, how Sonya keeps peering at me through the rearview mirror while Olivia looks like she's going to chew through her bottom lip so, with a heavy sigh, I give in.

"Ask away."

"What happened?" Olivia squeaks, turning in her seat so she can look at me with a furrowed brow.

"We broke up."

Sonya snorts. Olivia purses her lips but doesn't sass back.

"Why did you break up?"

"He already likes someone and I'm not going to be her replacement so...that's it." I shrug, choosing to leave out a rather huge chunk of the story. There's no need to tell them who it is that he likes or how I found out. It is what it is and we're over and...I'll get over him.

Olivia frowns and looks to Sonya in an almost pleading way. Sonya doesn't have an answer it seems because she says nothing. I don't know if it's the way I said it but neither of them bring it up afterwards. Both quickly try to change the topic to our day at the arcade. Olivia is excited to play, Sonya is worried she'll suck at all of it and I don't really care but I play along.

Olivia knows I'm in a foul mood while Sonya seems to buy it. She hasn't known me as long so it's not surprising. Olivia, on the other hand, can't keep herself from looking at me with these eyes that are screaming *"talk to me."* I never do.

Rather than ruin Sonya and Olivia's day, I try to spend more time with the others that joined us at the arcade. Even when we arrive we recognize a few people that weren't with our original group. Olivia tries to get me to stick around with her but I jump from one game to the next until I find myself hanging out with a cute guy by the name of Eddie.

I recognize him but can't quite remember where, probably had some classes together. I don't feel all that bad about not knowing since he admits he only remembers seeing me in the yearbook. We both laugh about it and continue playing games with each other.

It hurts to think that Jace could be here with me but I'm quick to shake that thought away.

Now I am aware that sometimes I'm a little too confident for my own good but, I'm pretty freaking sure Eddie is flirting with me. There are times when I just get that vibe from him, like the one I give when I'm trying to flirt the pants off some guy. Normally I'd be all for it but now...I end up excusing myself, giving a bogus lie that I have a phone call.

It isn't until I'm out of the arcade that I realize I was holding my breath earlier. After taking in a few deep ones to make up for the lack of air or

some bullshit, I slap my cheeks a couple times.

"What's wrong with you, Mylo?" I hiss, tapping my fingers against my face while I pout. "There's a cute guy flirting with you. Who cares about Jace? It's over, we're done. I'm moving on, come on, come on."

Except wasn't Jace moving on too? The thought of that makes my chest burn, like a fire has been lit that refuses to go out.

"Mylo!" Sonya calls causing me to spin around to find her, Olivia and the others walking out of the arcade. "We're going to get some pizza, you ready?"

"I'm always ready for food!"

Sonya giggles and, with Olivia's hand in hers, the two head for the food court. I'm not surprised to see Eddie waiting for me to catch up at the escalator. Ok, I can do this. I'm fine. Everything is fine.

Nodding to myself, I walk on over to Eddie's side, who gives me a smile that I do my best to return. He's talking about some new game that's coming out, which I would normally be interested in but my mind is all over the place. I can feel a headache coming on.

Fuck, my mental pep talk didn't work. Maybe it's best that I do leave? I might have been pushing it by thinking I could come out and spend a whole day surrounded by others. I've managed to have some fun at the arcade and that's cool but now I'm starting to feel tired and almost annoyed. I could catch a bus home, it's not far.

I'm not really paying attention so when we reach the bottom of the escalator I end up walking in the wrong direction. Feeling a hand wrap around my own makes me stop and, for a moment, my heart skips a beat like it's hoping some jackass by the name of Jace is going to be right behind me. I snort at my own thoughts.

"Mylo, the food court's this way," Eddie says, tugging on my hand that suddenly feels cold.

That doesn't last long though, because my hand is ripped away from Eddie's grasp without warning. The unexpected touch has me spinning my head around to find exactly who my heart has been screaming for all day.

Jace has my hand in his own with a grip so tight that I'd need a crowbar to rip us apart. I would be asking for one but I'm too busy internally panicking to do anything other than stare at the fiery glare that he has pointed at Eddie. I can feel actual heat seeping out of his pores.

"Hey, Jace," Eddie mumbles, obvious confusion on his face, especially when he sees the way Jace is holding my hand then looks up to see the glare on his face.

"Sorry, Eddie, but my boyfriend and I need to talk," Jace practically spits at him before pulling me away from the scene of the crime. I say crime scene because I feel like my heart has stopped and there's about a corpse on the floor any minute. My corpse.

"J-Jace, what the hell?" I hiss, trying to tug my hand away but it only seems to make him hold tighter. I actually think he's cutting off the circulation. "That fucking hurts, let go!"

"Why?" Jace huffs, looking at me over his shoulder with a furrowed brow. "No way, we need to talk."

I'm about to argue that there's nothing to talk about but, to make everything 100 times worse, because why the fuck not, I hear an all too familiar voice shouting from the second floor.

"Jace! Hey, where are you going?"

I look up to see Mackenzie looking over the railing. Beside her is, I'm assuming, Jace's grandmother, who has on a similar look of confusion. Neither get an answer since Jace is too busy dragging me out of the mall. After a few seconds, I let him, because it's probably best we not have a scene in public.

So, once we're out of the mall and further into the parking lot, I finally grab Jace's arm and use it as leverage to rip my hand away. The force actually causes me to stumble back but Jace is quick to grab my hand, *again* .

"Come on!" I groan, swinging our hands between us because, damn it, I don't wanna do that again! "What do you want? Go back to Mackenzie, she's waiting–"

"Will you stop bringing her up!" Jace yells. Actually *yells* . And the sound keeps me from doing anything other than staring at him with wide eyes.

Jace is shivering in place, his eyes downcast like he is ashamed to have even risen his voice. From our connection, I can feel his hands starting to sweat. I never meant to make him yell, especially when it's clear that Jace never wanted to do that. Now I feel like an even bigger jackass. Suddenly, I want to apologize but Jace doesn't give me the chance.

"Can we talk first?" He asks, voice shaking and eyes refusing to look away from the ground. "After we talk, if you still hate me then that's fine. I won't bother you anymore and we'll... we'll be done."

I never realized how much I didn't want to hear that until Jace said it.

My silence seems to be answer enough because Jace guides me through the parking lot to his car. I have no idea how Mackenzie and his grandma got here, hopefully with their own vehicles because we're leaving in Jace's. My phone is going off in my pocket, Olivia is calling and I'm quick to ignore it. I do send her a text explaining that Jace and I are going to talk but after that it's put on silent and forgotten about in my lap.

I'm shocked when Jace reaches over to take my hand again. Feeling his fingers slip between my own, the heat that's now resting on my thigh, it makes me have to look away. I fear he may read everything I'm feeling with a single look and that scares me.

So, our ride is silent. I'm not sure why he takes us to my place. Maybe he assumed my dad wasn't home or because it's closer but we end up stepping

out of his car and heading inside without a word. Our hands remain tied together in the lobby, onto the elevator, down the hall and into my home.

My heart is racing. The silence is killing me. Our own breathing sounds too loud. I feel any moment Jace is going to completely crumble all my resolve.

What the hell am I meant to do if he does? What does he want to talk about? What does he have to say? Is it even going to make any of this better? Who fucking knows but I'm freaking out and haven't a clue what to do!

IMG 020

"Make yourself comfortable," I mumble after the two of us reach my room. I'm not sure why I bother shutting the door, no one is here except us. Habit, I guess.

Jace has never been in my room before so I'm not surprised to see that he's looking around. His gaze takes in everything, including the picture frames that are now face down on my bedside table. They're pictures of us and I wonder if he knows that. Judging by the way he's biting his lip, he probably does.

I don't know what to say or if I'm meant to say anything. Jace asked that we talk but where to start? Thinking about it makes me fired up so speaking of it will only make things worse. I choose to keep quiet. If Jace wanted to speak then I'm assuming he knows where he wants to start.

With my back pressed against my bedroom door, I wait patiently for Jace to start. He admires my room for a few more minutes then takes a seat on my bed. The way his hands curl into my comforter reminds me of a child preparing themselves for a scolding. It forces me to look away, staring at the floor like that'll help the growing fear in my gut.

"Mateo was someone I always aspired to be," Jace says out of the blue causing me to turn my head in order to see him. His head is bent forward, angled so that his face is hidden.

"When we were little he watched over me, did his best to keep me safe from our dad. He'd sneak us out on bad nights, hid us in the closet, put his hands over my ears, whatever it took in hopes I'd see or hear just a little less than him. He even got held back a year in school from the stress and I just...como explico...h-he was the cool older brother. I wanted to be exactly like him."

Jace's hands remove themselves from the bed only to rest his elbows against his knees. He leans forward, his hands twisting together before him while his voice becomes muffled from the angle that he's sitting. It's all right though, I'm focusing so much on his voice that I don't think I can hear anything else.

"But Mateo was always better than me, funny, charming, cool, kind, smart and loved by everyone including the girl that I had my first crush on. A childish crush from a kid that felt like true love at the time, as it normally does. I thought it was a cruel twist of fate, some sort of reminder that I'll never live up to him."

Jace's words are starting to have a slight accent to them. The stress is causing him to slip up, some words jumble together while others he seems to have to remind himself to say in english. Where this is going, I haven't a clue but Jace seems to think it needs to be said. I wonder if it has to do with the anniversary coming up. Maybe he needed someone to talk to? I can't even be that mad at him when his voice sounds like he's on the verge of tears.

"Mateo loved Mackenzie and she loved him. They were the picture perfect couple that everyone thought would last forever, but I always had this twisted hope that something would go wrong. Then, Mateo came to me and asked whether he should go to Toho or Charlottesville University."

Jace finally looks up at me, his eyes slightly red with the need to shed tears. Such a sight is one I never wanted to see. It hurts in ways I can't describe, so much so that my own throat is starting to clench in hope not to tear up myself.

"I told him Charlottesville. It had a great law program, and I wanted him to be happy, but then I realized he'd have to move. A twisted part of me was almost happy about it, and I hated myself for that. Mackenzie obviously wasn't happy about the move. They got into a huge fight and Mateo, he, he uh–" Jace reaches up to rub the corner of his eyes. A tear manages to escape, rolling down his cheek to drip off his chin. "He got drunk with his friends, it was the first time he ever drank. They got into that wreck when he tried to go apologize to her and... just like that, Mateo was gone and

Mackenzie was right in front of me, like all my darkest thoughts suddenly came into being."

"Jace," I whisper, finally taking a step forward upon realizing that Jace somehow blames himself. As if he imagined that would happen and as if he actually wanted it to. He loves his brother, that's clear as day to anyone. It's sad how easily our minds can twist the smallest of things, I should know. "That–it wasn't your fault. You never wanted that."

Jace isn't listening though. Shaking his head, he takes a trembling breath to continue his tale that I can't stand hearing anymore.

"What...what kind of sick bastard sleeps with his dead brother's girlfriend? Who the hell does that?" Jace suddenly stands causing me to take a step back. He ruffles his hair in frustration before twisting his fingers into it with such ferocity I fear he may rip a chunk out.

"Mourning or not, it was wrong and stupid and–and if I could take it back I would! I–I didn't plan for it to happen and it only happened once. It all got so messed up and I just wanted to get over it, all of it, everything. Not just her. I wanted to forget about everything. I wanted to be happy like everyone else and, yeah, I dated with hope that I'd feel something, anything other than what I was before. And when we started going out, I admit I still had a twisted hope that Mackenzie and I would somehow, someday work out because I didn't think I could get anything else. I'm scum of the earth. She only looked at me because of an attachment built through terrible loss. I didn't deserve more. I didn't expect anything to happen between you and me, especially when we hardly knew each other, and you were just dating me because you wanted to get in my pants."

I would say ouch but, honestly, he's right and it was the same for me. I asked Jace out in hopes that Olivia would get with Sonya, not because I expected to go through any of this. Sure, I found him stupidly attractive, he was fun to speak to when we did but that was it. There was no desire to be anything more than fuck buddies so I can't get on Jace about that.

Feelings change though and, judging by the almost pleading look in his eyes, Jace's feelings have definitely changed.

Jace wraps his hand around his bicep, squeezing it like it's the only way he's going to keep himself here. With a trembling voice, he speaks as if he expects me to yell at him, "I, mierda, I-I won't blame you if you don't believe me but, lo prometo, there's nothing between Mackenzie and me anymore. I won't lie and say she isn't important to me. Mateo loved her. She's family to us, but me gustas mucho, Mylo. No quiero perderte."

My heart decides to completely ignore its primary function and, instead, throw a fucking rave in my chest that results in my inability to properly breathe. My eyes can't meet his, choosing to dart about the room in an attempt to find something to calm me. It doesn't work so I'm left sputtering like a fool, "Y-You know I don't...I-I don't know what you said."

At least not all of it and I'm not sure why I'm digging myself a bigger hole. If he honestly repeats–

"I really like you, Mylo...and I don't want to lose you."

Fuck me. Can't he be a bit more embarrassed and, I don't know, play hard to get? Act a little tough and refuse to repeat it so my heart can take a breather. I'm turning into a pile of mush and I'm meant to be mad but I'm not! Damn it!

"Are you disappointed?" Jace inquires softly after a few minutes of silence pass because how the fuck do I respond to any of this?

"Huh?" That, that's how I respond.

"Finding out that Prince Charming isn't so charming."

I'm not sure what he finds about himself to not be charming because the asshole is too charming for his own good. However, seeing the absolute defeat and self-loathing etched across his face makes me realize that he honestly doesn't think so highly of himself. I'm almost mad because Jace doesn't deserve to feel or think that way.

He's the nicest guy I ever met, past included. Jace is simply Jace and, like I've said before, he is the very definition of comfort and charm. Nothing has

changed.

"We all think, do, or say terrible things, Jace. People can act all high and mighty. They claim they've never done or said something to hurt someone, but that's a lie," I say with a gesture to myself. I, of all people, know that to be true. "That's just how people are. We make mistakes, realize we did, *sometimes* , and learn from them, but you're the last person to worry about being a jerk. Believe me. You need to forgive yourself."

Jace doesn't respond, only continues to stand there looking lost. That makes two of us.

I haven't a clue what I'm doing right now either. Should I be mad? Should I be understanding? Should I believe him? I really want to. I want to believe he's telling the truth. My heart is telling me to hold him while my mind is screaming to run.

But it's a little late to run, isn't it? I should have done that weeks ago so, fuck it, I'm screwed. Time to accept it.

Jace doesn't seem to know how to respond after I walk over to him in order to throw my arms around his shoulders. For a moment, he doesn't move but it seems physical comfort is something he has desperately needed judging by the almost painful hold he has on me a moment later. Feeling his forehead press against my shoulder I can now tell that he's shaking, not only feel it but also visibly see it.

It hurts. I hate it.

"Thanks for telling me," I whisper into his wavy brown locks that I have now learned smell of cinnamon. Damn, I love cinnamon but that isn't important at the moment. I'll ask about his shampoo another time! "I'm sorry that...that I forced you to—"

"You didn't," Jace interjects, shaking his head slightly but refusing to remove it from my shoulder. "I shouldn't have lied about Mackenzie or played it off as something it wasn't. It's not something I'm proud of. Soy un idiota."

I know one of those words and I don't like it so, gently, I pull away. Jace tries to keep his gaze down but that's impossible when I press my hands to his cheeks, forcing him to look at me. Those gorgeous hazel eyes of his are looking at me with an almost fearful expression. Again, it hurts and I hate it. Jace looks best when he's smiling, end of story.

"Why didn't you want to tell me?" I ask although I have an idea as to why based on what he has said previously.

"At first, because I didn't think it mattered. You'd have your fun with me and it'd be over, but then it did matter, and—" Jace bites his lip, his grip tightening on me while his fingers twist into the fabric of my shirt. "And I thought if you found out you would be angry, disappointed, ashamed, disgusted with the truth of the pathetic me. I didn't want you to see me as something other than charming, I guess."

Let me repeat myself in case no one has gotten it yet, I hate it. I hate that Jace thinks because he made a mistake, which he clearly sees as a mistake so lesson learned, that somehow that makes him a bad person. It doesn't and I understand. I haven't even gone through what he has and I understand because it's understandable and he needs to realize that. Fuck, I don't know how to make him realize but I have to because he doesn't deserve that kind of pressure. He doesn't deserve that kind of self loathing so, I'll say what I have to.

"Eres idiota."

Jace hums, seems I messed it up but whatever, I'm sure he gets it!

"You are an idiot," I say since, apparently, I really don't know any spanish. Why did I choose french again? I can't even speak that though so, obviously, school didn't help. Back to the point!

"I'm not angry. I'm not disappointed. I'm not ashamed and certainly not disgusted. You are still annoyingly charming." I pinch his cheeks for good measure, his face squishing up and eyes squint shut for a moment before I let go. He looks a little confused but remains silent. " People can't expect perfection. We can't expect everyone to live up to the love in fairytales

where no one has ever done wrong. We're all a bunch of losers who fuck shit up everyday, and only pretend we don't out of fear of what others will think of us, like their opinions matter a damn bit."

Jace snorts.

"And it's kinda cool that we're fuck ups because, what's that saying?" I pat his cheek like that will help me remember it. "Ah! Failure is our greatest teacher. If we don't make mistakes, we don't learn. Making a mistake doesn't make you a bad person or a failure. It makes you human just like everyone else."

Jace leans forward, pressing his forehead against my own. It's hard to focus when he's so close, even more so when I see the adorable blush beneath his eyes, not to say I'm any better. I am a red hot mess.

"What I'm trying to say is—"

The words are stuck in the back of my throat, refusing to come out because once they do there's no turning back. That line I spoke about with Olivia before has not only been crossed but also left in the dust. I know that yet I'm still thinking I can head back to it if I just keep these few words to myself but...I no longer know if I actually want to.

"I'm saying that I like every damn thing about you, Jace."

And if I had a chance to turn back then I sure as hell don't now, especially not after seeing the pure joy on Jace's face. It's an expression that will be burned into my mind until the day I die, I'm sure of it...and I couldn't be more grateful for that.

~

If you attack others for still liking Jace and forgiving him, you will be muted. Immediately. I won't warn you.

This is why I warned y'all in the first chapter. Heed thy warnings lol And again, if ya don't like it, stop reading ^_^ I had a bit more spanish

in this chapter than all the others so if I screwed it up, do tell. I did ask friends for advice, but we shall see.

IMG 021

Jace's warm breath fans over the back of my neck while his legs only manage to tangle themselves up more with my own. His arms are around my waist, holding me against his chest while he rests with his back on the headboard. My TV is on but the volume is so low that it's basically useless.

The silence between us is comforting, a strange thing to realize but true. My thoughts are calm, my heart? Not so much. Feels like it took a straight shot of adrenaline and I fear Jace may be able to hear it...until I can actually feel his against my back. Now I can't even tell the difference, which is his and which is mine. They're both partying like it's 1969, which I don't get why they partied so much back then. Google, help me out later, I'm curious.

"She looks nothing like me," I blurt out causing Jace to hum in curiosity. "Mackenzie."

He remains silent so I turn my head to see him making an expression that basically says *"yeah, no shit, Sherlock."* I roll my eyes, squirm a bit in his lap then grumble, "You didn't say anything about it."

"You were pretty pissed," Jace answers, which, ok, yeah, true but still! He could have gave me a look or something, I don't know. "And I thought it'd just upset you more if I tried making a big deal out of it."

Also true. I guess I can't blame him. I can't help but wonder how our minds can turn the smallest details into the biggest problems. Fuck you too, brain. Get your shit together or we aren't going to live past thirty.

"When did you start liking me?" Speaking of living past thirty.

"Ugh, don't start that," I groan but, regardless of my disgust, Jace chuckles.

"Why not? I'm curious."

"I don't care. I'm not answering."

"I can answer it."

"Don't you dare."

"The one you should be focusing on is sitting in front of you," Jace says in a mocking tone that I believe was meant to be me. He failed miserably and, when I look back at him to express this, he bites his bottom lip (cutely, the fucker) and shrugs. "I thought you were brazen but completely adorable, everything started changing after that."

"Yeah, well, I *am* brazen and completely adorable. The fact it took you that long to realize it is an insult."

Jace, for whatever crazy reason, laughs and presses a kiss to my lips then another and another until I have to look away with flushed cheeks. Seriously, he can't be doing that while we're cuddling, *alone* , in my room. I will attack him. His pants will be off under 30 seconds if he riles me up, actually, make it 10.

If he thinks because we were fighting earlier makes him safe than he is very mistaken. I am more than ok with ripping his clothes off. In fact, maybe we should argue a bit more, angry make up sex? Yes, please!

"So, what about you?" Jace tries to ask again.

"I'm not answering it."

"Come on," Jace pleads, burying his face into the back of my neck. His hot breath sends a shiver down my spine that, honestly, goes straight to my groin. What can I say, the dick wants what the dick wants, sometimes the heart has to take the back seat.

"If you keep arousing me I will get a boner and I will expect you to take care of it," I announce, which only makes Jace laugh and, once more, the warm breath against my skin only excites me. I'm shivering from head to toe in his arms, elbowing him slightly as a way to make him stop but that doesn't really work.

Jace knows what he's doing. There's no way he doesn't.

"Tell me." Jace rests his chin against my shoulder. I don't need to look to know he's watching me with those big hazel puppy dog eyes of his. Fuck.

"I don't know," I blurt out, mentally grumbling to myself about caving in. "How am I meant to know? It just happened."

Jace hums and I'm not sure if he is displeased with my answer or not. However, before I can ask, I am given an answer except it's more of a physical response. Jace reaches up to grip my chin, angling it slightly so that he can press his lips to mine. I haven't time to process what's happening before his tongue is pressing past my lips. Yeah, there's no way he isn't aware of the dangerous game he has started.

When Jace pulls away, he laughs at my immediate response to his kiss, "Keep that up and I'm going to expect something."

"What are you expecting?" Jace hums, playing ignorant.

"Sex."

"You really never beat around the bush, do you?"

"Do I need to with you?" I ask, grinning at the smile that Jace gives me in return.

"No," he answers before leaning back in to press his lips to mine.

There's a sudden onslaught of heat in my room and it's pouring from our own skin. My body breaks out with goosebumps when Jace's hand reaches beneath my shirt, pressing his cool palm against my stomach. I moan into the kiss, nipping at Jace's bottom lip teasingly before pulling away. I mimic the last time we were intimate, turning around so that I can rest in his lap. It's far more comfortable, my neck was starting to hurt.

Jace doesn't complain but instead wraps one arm around my waist while the other tangles itself in my hair to bring me back in for another kiss. My hands are pushing up his shirt, feeling the warm skin beneath my fingertips

makes my toes curl. A scorching heat is building between us, one that leaves me breathless and needing more.

My back is suddenly pressed fully against the bed and, honestly, I have no idea when Jace moved us. I will not ask questions because I don't care, especially when Jace leans back to remove his shirt before reaching down to do the same for me. Once his job is complete, he's laying over me once again, our lips connecting in a kiss full of lust and desire.

It's hunger and this hunger isn't just from me. It's relieving in a sense, feeling the need through a simple touch, somehow, the action makes me feel like we really are on the same page. I don't know why I wouldn't think that after earlier but, what can I say, I've always been more of a physical being. Words are far less believable than actions to me.

I'm not sure where this is going although I know where I want it to go. Feeling Jace's hips grinding into my own, the friction of our jeans adding to the pleasure building within me, I'm tempted to ask because, damn it, I really want more. More of Jace and only Jace and I've never thought like that before. I don't know how I really feel about it because the only thing my mind and body can do (and agree on, for once) is yearn for every little touch, every piece of Jace's attention. It's almost sad.

Seems Jace knows where he wants this to go though because he's on a mission to remove as much clothes from me as he can. I'm not fighting when he leans back once more to work on ripping off my skinny jeans. I snicker when he seems to have some trouble getting them off my legs and, no, I don't help. Hey, it's funny!

"Are you sure these actually fit?" Jace teases and I kick him in the chest for it.

He grunts, smirking after finally managing to rid me of my pants, boxers included. Jace's gaze lingers on my body, his hands resting against my parted thighs. Feeling the pressure of his fingertips against my skin, it's exhilarating. My eyes are mimicking his own, taking in every line, every curve, every small scar or beauty mark on his body like I expect to never

see it again. Slowly, Jace's gaze meets my own and, when he finally does, his cheeks are a brighter red than mine.

"See something you like?" I ask after the rather obvious check out he just gave me. Jace is bolder than I give him credit for though.

"Yes."

Maybe my heart skips a beat but we don't need to discuss that.

"Nightstand," I say more breathlessly than I mean to, gesturing to said object. Jace doesn't need to know more than that, sliding off the bed to retrieve the condoms and lube. My entire body shivers when his own pants and boxers slide to the floor. Now it's my turn to check out the back view and, damn it, my boyfriend is fine. Have I mentioned that I'm blessed lately? Because I am.

"See something you like?" Jace teases, placing himself back between my legs with a grin that is far too smug. I'll fix that.

Jace lets out an uncharacteristically loud shout when he finds himself flipped. Now I'm resting over him and he's laying wide-eyed on his back. It takes a moment for Jace to realize this new position. Yeah, the smirk is gone, replaced with an almost bashful expression that practically explodes when I grab the lube form his hand and ask, "Shouldn't you be getting to work?"

Jace's hand actually shakes a bit when I grab it and squeeze the tube to coat his fingers. There's almost a hesitancy to his actions, one of his hands resting on my hip while his eyes peer into my own. He doesn't say anything, simply stares and, oddly enough, it makes my heart race even more. I don't know if he wants me to say something and what that something could be, I'm even less sure so I improvise.

I lean in to press a soft kiss to his lips, nothing like the others, sweet and simple yet nothing short of amazing. It kind of pisses me off because I shouldn't be getting worked up over a little kiss when we're about to have

sex but, thanks heart, you really know what to care more about. You're so helpful, please note all my sarcasm because, in reality, fuck you.

Whatever Jace was waiting for, he must have got judging by his sudden grin followed by a rough a kiss. There's no hesitancy in his actions afterwards, his finger sliding into me followed by another when my hips start rocking along with the motions. My body is trembling, though the feeling of fingers inside me are familiar it's somehow much different with Jace. I shouldn't say somehow. I know exactly why it is and thinking that only intensifies the already overwhelming feelings until I'm left with an indescribable need.

Maybe Jace feels the same or, rather, I hope he does. But when I feel his fingers running through my hair then resting against my cheek and his lips pressing to mine, somehow, I know he's feeling the same. It's scary and it's likely only going to get worse. Part of me is excited about it.

My hand searches for the condom beside us. Jace only stops in his preparation when I pull away, tearing open the packaging in order to get what my entire body is screaming for. It's odd how my hands are shaking yet there's no moment of hesitation like before. Once the condom is on I don't wait to press my hips back, feeling him slide inside me, his hips tensing beneath me while my hands shake against his chest at every slight tingle of pain running up my spine. I'm used to it but I still need a moment, which Jace seems to struggle with judging by the way he's biting his lip and the tight grip his hands have on my thighs.

My first movement is sudden causing Jace to let out a low growl that has me slamming back down into him just to hear it again. I'm not only rewarded with the same noise but also, his entire body jolts up, his hips crashing into my own in a quick and needy rhythm that has me moaning with each thrust of his hips. It's hard and fast from the start, our hips crashing into each other over and over, knocking each breath from my lungs so each sound comes out needy and desperate. Not that Jace is any better, he is more verbal than I thought and, fuck, if it isn't hot. Every groan he makes, every roll of his hips into mine, the call of my name, it's so hot and so sweet at the same time that I can't help wanting to hear more.

What other reactions can I get? What can I do to hear his voice? I've only got the first taste and, already, I'm addicted.

It's Jace's turn to surprise me with a sudden movement. Like earlier, I find myself on my back after a quick turn of events, literally. Jace's hands lift my hips while he thrusts himself in deeper. I let out a strangled cry followed by another and another until it's all I can make with every thrust of his hips. His fingers are digging into my hips while mine are gripping at the sheets like I'm trying to hold onto reality, because I am. The pleasure within me is building up faster than I can comprehend it. I'm close and, judging by the desperation in Jace's movements, so is he.

My orgasm is intense, hitting me shortly after Jace's hand wraps around my cock. The added pleasure has my body tightening around him while I finally fall over the edge I've been standing on for a while. Jace is soon to follow, his hips locking against my own while his body trembles and, for an added bonus, it's my name he calls...and it shall remain that way in case anyone is curious.

I am actually on cloud nine afterwards. My mind takes its' good old time returning to me. My entire body is still tingling. It feels like there's an inferno within me that refuses to be put out and it's all Jace's fault. I'm sweaty. The bed is a mess and it isn't until Jace is laying beside me, as breathless as I am, that I breathe out, "Tell me we're going for round two."

Jace laughs. "Why am I not surprised you said that?"

"Can we go raw next time? It's so much better."

"Mylo."

"I never realized how much I liked my name until you were moaning it."

" *Mylo.* "

I look to Jace only to find him smiling at me. Funny, how it makes my heart race just as fast. I'll never tell him that. He doesn't need to know he has that kind of power but, honestly, he may not need to hear it. He has to know,

especially when I reposition myself so that I'm leaning over him, pressing one lingering kiss after the other to his lips that seem just as eager to reciprocate. His body is warm, his hands even more so.

Yet again, I ruin the moment after pulling away to ask, "Seriously, round two?"

"I swear, Mylo," he says but...

We go for round two in the shower. What can I say, I'm irresistible!

~

If this didn't happen Mylo would have came out of the story and killed me. You know he's been waiting for this moment! This is the last NSFW chapter, you're welcome Mylo lol Anyways, so the Mackenzie thing was brought up and, yeah, they really just share some common red head features. It's perfectly common to compare ourselves to "our love rivals," so there ya go. If ya don't like it, stop reading **shrugs I don't really have a lot of questions this chapter cause it was all Fluff and Rated R Fluff so... will Mylo ask for round three? FIND OUT NEXT TIME ON MYLO, OUR SEX CRAZED TEEN WITH A HOT BOYFRIEND, WHAT COULD GO WRONG?**

IMG 022

We're in trouble.

"Hey dad," I nearly shout when I step out of the bathroom, clean and far more than satisfied but now it's being replaced with worry upon realizing that my dad has come home at a rather bad time.

"Hey," dad says with a cocked brow of confusion. Understandable. I would make that expression if someone randomly shouted at me after getting out of the bathroom.

I quickly close the door seeing as Jace is standing in there with nothing but a towel and a wide-eyed expression of fear. He's trying to redress without making any noise while I'm attempting to think of how to get him from the bathroom to my room without dad seeing. It's pretty obvious what we were doing but–

"Mylo, are those hickeys?" Dad asks, pointing to the alleged hickey. I quickly try to find it only to realize he said "hickeys" and, yeah, I may remember a few that Jace had caused. Damn, I should have put on more than sweatpants.

"Uh." Well, shit, how do I get out of this mess?

Dad furrows his brow, glancing from my bedroom door to the bathroom. He then gestures behind him towards the doorway...he saw Jace's shoes and my dad is no fool. He has put it together. "Don't tell me he's here, that boy that had you bawling your eyes out the other day."

I bite my lip, hoping Jace didn't hear that.

"No, of course not," I reply but I can't even convince myself with the almost squeaky tone to my voice. Maybe that has to do with the fact that my throat is raw or it's because I'm a terrible liar, both probably.

Dad gives me a disbelieving look that I sheepishly smile at.

"It's nothing dad, just, y'know...teenage hormones. We used protection, all is good in the hood!"

He's not buying it and maybe I should have phrased it better but, still, what does he expect me to say? I know he is aware of my boyfriends before and he has to know that I've had sex or, at least, assumed that I have. Fuck, we should have had round two in my room and saved a shower for later!

Before dad or I can continue though, Jace walks out of the bathroom in a pair of sweats that I'm letting him borrow. His ass looks great in them, I think I shall let him keep them.

Immediately, my dad glares at him while Jace nervously looks at me then my dad. He puts on a smile, one that is dripping with anxiety. That's cool, same, same.

"Hello, Sir."

Sir, he called him sir. I pinch the bridge of my nose. Fuck, this is bad.

Since we're already up Shit Creek there's no point turning back! Giving in, I wave between the two and give a half-assed introduction, "Dad, this is my boyfriend, Jace. Jace, this is my dad...who has awful timing."

"Mylo." My dad's tone states that I am so grounded if I push his buttons enough. Ok, understandable, brought my boyfriend over to get it on (technically makeup but making up usually leads to getting it on so same difference), the boyfriend that my dad never met and does not think highly of for obvious reasons, I get it but, fuck, we almost got away with it!

"I'm sorry for giving such a bad first impression," Jace says and, although he's shaking a bit, he keeps his gaze locked with my dad's. I give him bonus points for that because my dad is super glaring right now. "About Mylo, I...I didn't mean–"

"Obviously we already made up!" I interrupt, pointing to the hickey on my neck, which probably doesn't help. Dad huffs like he wants to say something but is too frustrated to come up with words. "It was just teen drama, we talked it over and had perfectly safe sex."

"Mylo Jean!"

I grimace. He pulled out the middle name. The middle name that I hate because who and why in the fuck is my middle name Jean? And judging by the snort Jace just gave, he's going to tease me for that name later.

"I still hate you for that," I say, which has dad hissing at me to get in the kitchen.

He points to Jace too, instructing him to do the same so we both slowly make our way to the table. There, we all take a seat, my dad sitting across from us with a stern stare that's mostly on Jace but from time to time he looks to me.

"I don't like you," dad blurts out causing Jace to wince and me to snort. I suppose some of my attitude came from dad because he sure didn't beat around the bush with that one.

"Understandable," Jace says, nervously rubbing at the back of his neck. "If it's alright with you, I'd like to try and change your mind."

"No."

When I cackle again dad glares at me so I shut up real quick but, I know it's wrong, I'm so enjoying this.

"Mylo doesn't get upset easy," dad says causing me to give him a pleading stare. "Not long ago it seemed he was trying to forget you then suddenly you two are sleeping together like nothing happened."

Jace blushes a bit. He probably didn't think my dad would just out and say he knows we're having sex. Again, I got a bit of the bluntness from my dad so now Jace understands. I can blame genetics! No longer my fault!

"We aren't suddenly sleeping together. Seriously, dad, we talked about it," I try once more, reaching for Jace's hand beneath the table. He happily takes mine, intertwining our fingers and resting our hands on his thigh. Move it up a bit more, please and thank you.

"I really didn't mean to upset Mylo," Jace says once more, trying to meet my dads gaze. Well, I say try but he actually is meeting his gaze just...he's kinda shaking while my dad is sitting there like a rock. "We were having a fight and it was entirely my fault but, we have talked about it. Everything is cleared up and I swear I'll do everything I can to make sure it doesn't happen again...Sir."

He called him sir again, kill me. It's somehow super fucking cute yet incredibly cringy. I want to shake him and make out with him at the same time. This is so frustrating. Dad, why are you here? You're never here! Leave for the love of my penis!

I glance between the two of them, waiting for one to crack. Surprisingly, my dad's glare softens when he asks, "How old are you?"

"17."

"You two go to the same school?"

"Yes."

"How long have you been dating?"

"Almost three months."

"Are we playing 20 questions? Because, if so, I want in," I interject, raising my hand for some attention, which I get from dad in the form of a glare and Jace as a smile. Ah, yes, the way things should be, all attention on me! "As cute as this is dad, do you have to interrogate him? If anything, I'm the one tainting him. I've been trying to get nudes for months and he refuses to give me any because he is a responsible young adult."

Dad clenches his eyes shut while twisting his neck to the side like he's using all his willpower not to lecture me. Jace is trying not to laugh but a soft chuckle makes it out that he quickly tries to cover with his hand.

"I'm ordering dinner," dad sighs, getting up to head into the living room. Jace and I watch him pull out his phone. "What do you guys want?"

"Food."

Dad looks at me over his shoulder and I know I have ten seconds to not be an annoying piece of shit and answer seriously.

"Pizza or chicken wings would be nice," I correct myself with a smile.

Dad glances to Jace, who jumps at the sudden attention. "Chicken wings sound good?"

Jace nods, responding softly with a yes. With that, I get up and start pulling Jace back to my room. Before we can get there though, dad shouts, "The door stays open!"

"Damn it," I hiss. We can't go for round three but Jace is so cute like this. How am I meant to resist? This is blasphemous!

Jace lets out a relieved sigh when we're back in my room. I leave my door about half way open. If dad doesn't like it he'll tell me but it's just weird to leave it wide open...like a serial killer will come bursting into our apartment or something. You never know, it could happen!

Being the wonderful boyfriend that he is, Jace removes the sheets from my bed. See, this is why I don't make my bed, to avoid any possible mess of getting on the comforter. I'm about to voice this until Jace asks, "Where's the washer?"

"You have to pass my dad to get to it."

He hands me to the sheets causing me to laugh. I have no issue waltzing out with the dirty sheets. My dad gives me a shocked look but probably more so out of the fact that I had the audacity to do it while Jace is still here.

"Hey, we have to have a clean environ–"

"I will ground you for a month."

I spin on my heel and head back to my bedroom without a word, snickering as I do. Once there, I find Jace sitting on my bed like he isn't sure what he's meant to be doing. His shirt is back on (boo) but he keeps rubbing his arm nervously. His gaze is downcast, body pulled in towards himself like he's upset. I can't really blame him. My dad's home and we just went through that debacle so it's a miracle he's still here.

"You ok?" I ask, taking a seat next to him. I lean towards him, pressing our arms together before taking his hand once more. Feeling his hand in mine is more exhilarating than I'd like to admit so I'll keep it to myself.

"I'm sorry."

"For what?"

"For upsetting you so much, I-I should have told you about–"

"Stop it," I interrupt, squeezing his hand in hopes to bring his attention to me. It works; his gaze finally removes itself from the floor to focus on me. "We already talked about it. It's fine, everything is fine and it's over...besides, I'm sure you weren't feeling all that great either."

Jace's silence tells me my assumption is correct.I feel a bit guilty for being happy about it but...knowing you're cared for can sometimes be a confusing feeling.

"We're both sorry about it. We'll argue again someday over something stupid, fix it and move on. Shit happens."

"Have you considered writing poetry?"

"I have always wanted to be in a rock band, tour the world, have an unhealthy amount of sex with strangers."

Jace snorts and I swear there's a hint of jealousy in his eyes, which reminds me.

"Now that I think about it, you were kinda hot earlier."

Jace stares at me in confusion, furrowing his brow when he can't seem to pinpoint what I mean. Ok, I should elaborate since Jace had a plethora of hot moments today.

"With Eddie," I explain causing his eyes to grow wide before his jaw opens and closes like he wants to speak but can't. "Pulling me off like that, I never pegged you for the jealous type."

"I just, because, you were, I mean, we had to talk so." Jace shrugs like that somehow says it all. Snickering, I lean over to rest my head on his shoulder causing his eyes to glance at me.

"I don't mind. Now that we're on the same page, I'm warning you, if someone tries to hold your hand I'm going to gnaw theirs off."

Jace chokes on his own breath. I have to pull back while he coughs, smacking his chest once to catch his breath while he says, "Y-You're ridiculous."

"I'm incredibly territorial and you are annoyingly hot so I don't want anyone to be blessed with the same sights that I have seen. So, what haven't you done before, like, sex wise?"

"Mylo."

Jace takes his hand from mine to hide his flushing face. He's red to the tip of his ears and I fucking love it. Grabbing his arm, I wrap my own arms around it and lean in, making sure to whisper, "I want to be as many as your firsts as possible."

I'm expecting some more acts of avoidance or laughter but instead Jace takes me by surprise, quite literally. I'm shocked when his hands suddenly grasp my cheeks, pulling me in for a kiss that leaves me breathless, not that

any of the ones prior to this one haven't done the same. Feeling his lips on mine, the tender touch of his hands and the warmth of his body leaning into mine is enough to make my mind turn into a useless pile of goo.

When Jace pulls away I desperately try to catch my breath but it doesn't work because he dives back in for another kiss. His tongue presses into my mouth, driving me wild. I'm not sure what reason he has for wreaking havoc but it should be a sin how talented he is at making me moan. Except, after my first rather loud noise, Jace pulls away, resting his forehead against mine while our lips brush from the natural movement of our breaths.

"What was that for?" I ask, my eyes unable to look away from his own. His deep gaze is making me question my own sanity.

"I'm just happy," he replies, before wrapping his arms around my shoulders to bring me into a tight embrace. My arms naturally wrap around him, my hands clutching the fabric of his shirt like I expect him to slip away. "Being with you is the best thing that's ever happened to me."

"I think that's exaggerating a bit."

"It's not. You're amazing, Mylo."

My heart is aching yet it doesn't hurt. I don't understand it but I'm not going to bother trying. For once, I actually feel like maybe that's true. Jace makes me feel amazing and...isn't that the best thing a person can do?

"What about you?" I ask causing Jace to hum to show he isn't sure what I mean. "Do you see yourself as amazing?"

Jace snorts, choosing not to verbally answer that since it's pretty obvious what his answer is. I roll my eyes.

"You are though, amazing, kind, understanding, charming, cute, frustratingly sexy–" I bury my face into the side of his neck. "I didn't expect anything to happen with us but I'm glad it did."

Jace holds me a little tighter. "Yeah, me too."

~

***drowns in fluff* These two are too cute, damn it! Mylo's dad has met Jace, how do you think that went lol? Will Mylo get to meet Jace's grandparents? Do you think that's a good idea? Will he ever meet Mackenzie? Who knows! (meeeeeeee, I always know)**

IMG 023

"It's great that you two worked things out but, can you not?" Olivia hisses, glaring at me for sitting on Jace's lap in the middle of the mall while feeding him fries. Is he blushing like crazy? Absolutely, and I love it.

"Hey, if you wanna sit on your girlfriend's lap, go ahead. She's right next to you." I point to Sonya, whose eyes grow wide at the attention but neither of them make a move. I grin and grab another fry to feed Jace. There's probably a part of him that wants me to move but he's stuck with me so he's gonna have to deal with it.

"You're disgusting," Olivia snarls.

"Birds of a feather flock together."

"Stop acting all lovey-dovey!"

"Don't be jealous."

"I'm not!"

"You're like siblings that never shut up," Sonya says with a sigh and shake of her head. We would glare at her but it's definitely true. Jace chuckles, probably in agreement but he doesn't nod or shake his head, simply allows me to continue sitting comfortably on his lap. Maybe I'm doing it on purpose because the girl at the register was giggling at him so I want to make sure she sees us but there's no reas-

"You're only sitting on his lap because the girl at the register was giving him googly eyes," Olivia says like she somehow read my mind before sneering when she sees me stiffen.

"Googly eyes?" Jace asks then goes to look back like he expects the girl to still be making that expression.

I quickly grab his cheeks and force him to look back at me. "Don't you dare."

"I'm not even allowed to look at other people now?"

"No." I quickly cover his eyes causing everyone to laugh at my ridiculous behavior. Jace pushes my hand away only to lean his head up like he's asking for a kiss, which I happily give because we're in public and everyone must know to stay away! And, well, obviously I want to kiss him so...win-win.

"How do you even put up with him, Jace?" Olivia asks while reaching into Sonya's leftovers to steal some food. Sonya simply smiles before pushing the plate over so that Olivia can have the rest and I know she'll inhale it because pizza is life.

Jace shrugs. "He's cute."

"You're insane."

I shoot her a glare. "Bitch, I can hear you."

"If you keep spoiling him like this, he'll only get worse." Olivia points her pizza accusingly at me until I actually attempt to reach out and grab it. She gasps in horror, pulling it back and nearly dropping it in her lap, which makes her shout in horror.

Sonya nods in agreement, which earns her a hurt expression from me. "True, soon he's going to drop out of college and stay at home so you can be his sugar daddy."

I would argue but I kind of like the sound of that. I wiggle my eyebrows suggestively at Jace but he knows better. I wouldn't give up photography even if he was completely loaded and willing to let me stay home. The four of us laugh once more, continuing our lunch until it's about time to watch our movie. Sonya and Olivia walk hand in hand to the theater while Jace and I do the same. He's swinging our hands between us, every now and

again he pulls me closer like he's going to give me a kiss but never does. What a tease.

"This is the first time we've all hung out together," Jace says.

"They did want you to come bowling with us the other day."

Jace stiffens at the mention of bowling and, yeah, maybe I'm teasing him just a bit but not for long! I nudge him playfully causing Jace to smile when he sees my teasing expression.

"Funny," he says softly before we reach the theater. There, I get us tickets since Jace paid for our meals. He once again acts all shocked that I'm paying, which earns him a swift kick to the shin that he curses about. We get ourselves some popcorn even if we aren't hungry because, hello, movie popcorn is the shit. Then head into the theater with Sonya and Olivia to watch a movie.

We're early so we take our seats. The commercials aren't even on yet so Sonya and Olivia are whispering about something on Sonya's phone while I'm leaning towards Jace trying to get popcorn. He's being an ass and holding it away from me, which is going to cause him a serious injury in about ten seconds. He best hand me my damn buttery goodness!

"Do you have a death wish?" I ask but my smile is betraying me.

"Speaking of bowling," Jace hums, which has me giving him a curious stare that turns into an amused one at what he has to say. "Have you talked to Eddie?"

"Mm, depends on why you're asking."

"Why do you think I'm asking?"

"Jealousy. I understand. I'm a total catch. Obviously Eddie wants some of this." I flick my hair over my shoulder like some cheesy cheerleader from a bad high school movie, which has Jace chuckling. He finally sits the

popcorn back in his lap so I can snag some but I'm still watching him to say more.

"Whose hotter, me or Eddie?"

I whistle in shock and while, yeah, Jace is definitely blushing, he is waiting for my response. I can't help but to smile. He's too damn cute. We're going to have to be typical teens and fuck in a movie theater because he is tempting me so much right now.

"You're definitely hotter," I answer, leaning over to press a chaste kiss to his cheek. Jace seems pleased with my response, smiling from ear to ear while tossing a piece of popcorn into his mouth.

Our movie starts shortly afterwards with me cuddling up to Jace the entire movie while Sonya and Olivia are being all cutesy together too. It's only ok because I have Jace. If I was a sad single, I would have killed them both but, for now, their lives are spared.

When the movie comes to an end and we're on our way out of the theater, Jace gets a call. I can't help but to look at his phone, only to sign in relief when I see Abuela flashing across the screen. Yeah, I feel like a bit of a jerk but I'll have to work on that.

Jace's words are lost to me while we standing outside the theater hand in hand. He's smiling while talking to her, looking to me out of the corner of his eye for a moment before responding to whatever she has to say. Sonya and Olivia are heading towards their car since we're supposed to meet up at Sonya's just to hang out and they came in her vehicle.

However, when Jace hangs up the phone, he looks to me and asks, "Want to come over?"

"To your house?"

He nods.

"Right now?"

"Yeah, Abuela is making dinner and she wanted to know if you'd like to come over."

His grandma wants me to come over? Hold the phone, does she want me to or did Jace ask if I could? And if I am coming over, does that mean we have to keep quiet? Are they aware that we're dating? There's no way they know, right?

"Hey, are you two coming?!" Olivia calls, standing outside Sonya's car while Sonya can be seen in the driver's seat. Jace brought his own vehicle but seems they were waiting for us to at least get to the car before pulling out.

"If you don't want to, I understand," Jace says with a smile but, I can see in his eyes that he's a bit hurt that I'm hesitating to answer. It's not like I mean to! This is a big deal. I'm going to meet his grandparents, the people that have been raising him for over half his life. It's like when he met my dad except under not so great circumstances.

"Uh...are you sure it's ok? She actually wants me to come along?" I inquire and I'm not sure what I actually want to hear.

Jace nods enthusiastically. "Yeah, they really want to meet you."

They do? Seriously? That makes me even more nervous but...I can't say no to those puppy dog eyes. So, with a deep breath, I tug on Jace's hand so we can go explain to Olivia and Sonya. They both understand and say goodbye, heading off to Sonya's together while I go with Jace.

It's insanely nerve wracking, sitting next to him while knowing we're on our way to meet his grandparents. These are the people that have been raising him. They're important to him and I've never met them before so, of course, I'm nervous. Shit, now I'm starting to wonder how I look, do I look ok?

I glance down at my jeans, which are fine. There are no stains or holes, same with my shirt. However, do I look well enough to meet the folks? Jace met my dad while in sweatpants and hickey's so at least I'm better than him. Still!

"You ok?" Jace asks. It seems my mental freak out is more obvious than I meant it to be.

"Huh?"

"You look a bit anxious."

"That's because I am."

Jace frowns. "Why? There's nothing to be worried about. Trust me, my grandparents will love you."

"It's just...I've never met them before so, what if I mess it up?"

"You'll do fine."

"I'm going to end up cussing a lot or breaking something."

"You won't."

I slam my hands against my face, pulling my cheeks down so that I look like an old lady. "They're going to hate me."

"They won't," Jace laughs and, for the rest of the way, our conversation continues as such. I don't even get to ask if they know about us dating before we're already pulling into the driveway. I never thought I'd hate the idea of entering Jace's house but, damn it, I hate it!

"Come on," Jace chuckles, standing outside his door while leaning down to peer in.

I swallow the lump in my throat but it in no way helps quell the nerves in my gut. Slowly, I follow behind Jace, who ends up waiting at his front door for me to reach him. The grin on his face informs me that he, too, is a bit of a sadist because now he's the one enjoying my panic. I punch him in the back for it.

Everything feels like it's going in slow motion. Jace opens the front door and I follow him inside. Dinner is either ready or being made because I

smell something delicious. I hear a woman's voice coming from the kitchen, each word escapes me while Jace smiles brightly and walks into said kitchen with his arms open.

I shyly follow behind, stepping into the kitchen to find Jace being enveloped in a huge hug from his grandma and his grandpa is sitting at the kitchen table until he sees me. The world seems to return to normal but only because I'm in a pure panic when his grandpa gets up to come towards me with his arms open.

"You must be Mylo," he says in a deep voice. Unlike Jace, his words hold a heavier accent but in no way is he difficult to understand. He wraps me up in a hug like he's known me for five years instead of five seconds. "We have heard a lot about you."

I'm tempted to ask, *really?* But, instead, all I get out is a nervous laugh that has his grandpa smiling at me. Shit, I know if I say something I'll mess it up but that doesn't mean not speaking is an option either!

Jace is gesturing to me while speaking something to his grandma. All I can catch is my name and something about...mi nobio, I think? Which immediately causes his grandpa to laugh and say, "Él es tan lindo."

Aha, I know what that means, he called me cute! Agreed, thanks but uh, why did he say that? There's too much going on so I can't do much of anything other than stand there and get hugged by his grandma next.

"Mylo, this is my abuelita, Valentina, and my abuelito, Raleigh," Jace finally officially introduces us while I'm still in an arm lock with his grandma.

"It's so nice to finally meet you, Mylo!" Valentina says, which makes me blush a bit because what exactly has Jace told them about me?

"It's nice to finally meet you too...Mrs. Cuevas." I don't know what else to say other than that but she's quick to correct me.

"You can call me Abuelita!"

I'm going to burst from embarrassment. Jace is having too much fun, chuckling to himself until I send him a glare. Is it really ok for me to call her grandma? I guess she told me to so it'd be rude if I didn't but I don't wanna mess this up, ugh!

"Dinner is almost ready so, please, sit down, sit down!" Mrs-I mean, Abuelita says while gesturing to the table in the dining room. I'm going to have to correct myself constantly. I don't want to make her upset if I don't call her abuelita. This is why meeting the family is so terrifying!

Jace grabs my hand causing me to give him an incredulous look. However, he isn't looking at me, instead, dragging me to the table and sitting me down. He's quick to take his spot next to me while I look back to find his grandparents remained in the kitchen to finish up.

Now I have the time to look at Jace and ask, "What's a mi nobio?"

"Huh?" Jace crinkles his nose in confusion. Did I say it wrong? Probably, judging by his expression.

"When you introduced me to...Abuelita, you said something about mi nobio."

"Oh!" Jace snaps his fingers while wearing a grin. Yep, I definitely said it wrong. "No, *mi novio* , it means my boyfriend."

What?

Jace frowns, likely due to the expression on my face but I don't even know what expression I'm making. I'm too shocked to respond because, not only did he introduce me as his boyfriend but his grandpa called me cute, which means they're ok with it? Did they know before this? When did he tell him? Why the hell he is so damn adorable? I'm not sure how that question comes into play with this but it is.

"Was I not supposed to tell them?" Jace asks, nibbling on his bottom lip from nerves.

I'm quick to shake my head. "It's not...I just...didn't think they'd know about us yet."

"Oh, I told them a while ago," Jace explains, which causes more shock because I had no idea. There's no need for me to ask though since Jace seems to be fine with telling me. "The first time I felt like I had a crush on a guy I actually told Mateo."

I can't say I'm not shocked to hear it. Even if the brothers seemed close, I never thought Jace would go to his brother to talk about his sexual orientation. He had a lot of faith in him but I'm sure it must have still been difficult to talk about, especially considering I never heard of Jace having a boyfriend before me. He must have still be uncomfortable with the idea, I'll have to ask him about it some time.

"Mateo made sure that I knew he'd love me no matter what so I didn't wait long to tell my grandparents. It was a bit awkward the first few months but it's been fine ever since."

"You're lucky to have them."

Jace grins from ear to ear, his eyes practically speaking for him. "I know."

"I hope you're hungry, Mylo!" Abuelita calls, walking up to the table with plates for Jace and me. I'm a bit shocked when she sits the food in front of me. I have no idea what it is, looks like a mash up of who the hell knows what with some shrimp. Abuelito brought in their own plates and takes a seat at the head of the table with a huge grin.

"Gracias, Abuelita!" Jace shouts, the grin on his face telling me that he's very pleased with her choice of food. I, on the other hand, am very confused. I've never seen it before so I look to Jace, who must be able to read my mind because he's already looking at me.

"It's mofongo."

"Mo whatto?"

"Mofongo." Jace laughs, as does his grandpa, who's watching me like he's waiting to see what reactions I'll give. So far, it's blushing because I am so lost but, either way, it smells amazing and my stomach growls loudly.

Abuelita returns with some side dishes of homemade fried rice, claiming it's just in case I'm still hungry after. I thank her with a smile while she goes on to ask, "Have you tried mofongo before?"

I shake my head.

"Oh, I hope you like it!"

"I'm sure I will." Because I love food, all food and, after taking a bite with everyone watching me, I'm happy to say it's delicious. My face must tell them this because they all laugh while I nervously look away and continue eating.

The atmosphere at Jace's home is a mirror of himself, gentle and comforting. His grandparents are sweet, more than sweet. They happily dote on him in front of me, which I have no issue with because I agree with every statement. There's even some nice compliments about me, seems Jace has shown them some pictures I've taken. Abuelita even asks if she could purchase a few and frame them. I'm quick to request food as payment instead because this is delicious and I am in need of more.

Thankfully, dinner ends without me messing anything up. Afterwards, we sit at the table just talking for over an hour. It's so easy to talk with them that I understand why Jace is so easy to talk to. If he grew up in such an environment no wonder he's the sweetest thing to grace this earth.

It's getting late and Jace has work tomorrow. I'm given two very large hugs from his grandparents before I go, both insisting I come over for dinner more often. I'm more than happy to oblige and, with that, I've successfully met the family without messing it all up, which Jace brings up in the car ride.

"See, I told you they'd love you."

"I wouldn't have panicked as much if you told me they already knew we were dating," I grumble, crossing my arms over my chest while pouting in the passenger side. Freaking ass, should have let me know so I knew I wouldn't have to try hiding it.

"Sorry, kinda slipped my mind."

I whack him in the back of the head for that. He's still grinning though.

"You'll come over for dinner again, right?" Jace inquires, glancing at me out of the corner of his eye.

"Obviously, your grandma is a beast in the kitchen."

Jace eagerly nods.

"I'm a bit pissed you haven't shared her skills sooner."

Jace laughs moments before we pull into the parking lot of my apartment complex. I hesitate to get out, looking over at Jace to find him staring back at me. The two of us smile on instinct, which in turn causes us to laugh. I look away while ruffling my hair. I really don't feel like leaving yet so...

"Wanna fuck before you go?"

Jace snorts. "Mylo."

"Well, you don't seem to want to leave yet and I sure as hell don't want you to. My dad isn't home so sex seems like a good option."

"You have no tact about it."

"And yet you're shutting the car off and eager to go."

Jace doesn't respond, not verbally at least. He's quick to get out of the car so we all know he was hoping for it. He can pretend like I'm the only pervert but we all know that, deep down, his mind is in the gutter with me!

~

Mylo, always thirsty. So Mylo has met Jace's family and things have gone well! He's even introduced as the boyfriend, did you expect that? I didn't really want the drama of that in this story and, with Jace's family and what they've been through, I felt it was fitting. But, what about Mackenzie? Mylo will eventually have to see her so how do you think that will go?

IMG 024

The days leading up to August 22nd are tense, to say the least.

Jace smiles and laughs but I can see his energy drifting away bit by bit. There's not much I can do other than remind him I'm here, to which he always smiles and thanks me. I imagine things at home aren't that great either because, by the 20th, Jace explains that he's going to stay with his grandparents for the next few days.

I'm obviously ok with his decision. They wish to mourn and I haven't exactly been in their lives long enough to take part. So, the most I get from Jace are a few "good morning" and "good night" texts until the 22nd arrives. Then there's silence.

I'm on edge because of it all day. It's hard to focus on work, or anything for that matter. I keep checking my phone like I expect to get a call or text. What the hell is he going to say though? Hey, I'm super fucking depressed, because I don't need to read that in order to know it's true nor do I think it would make him feel better. Maybe I'm hoping that he'll ask to meet up later but, I know he wants to be with his family right now.

Olivia and Sonya end up asking me how things are going too. Sadly, I don't have much to tell them because I don't even know what's going on. Hopefully I'll see him tomorrow or, at least, hear from him. I don't have the guts to call him today either.

Thankfully, I survive the day, physically anyways. Mentally, I'm a wreck. Nothing is keeping my mind off Jace. I try watching TV, going over my school schedule (that I just received), looking into some threads on my schools website about future classes and professors. Nothing is working.

Normally, I'd be going for my camera and heading out to snap some photos but...I keep thinking about Jace. What if he calls and wants to come over?

What if he wants me to go see him? I rather be at home, ready to go just in case. Fuck, I'm so ridiculous but there's not much else I can do!

I want to be able to send him some long, beautiful text message about loss and life and love but I'm not that talented. Kind words have never been my forte. I'm starting to think I should watch some more cheesy drama's so I can learn a suave line or two for situations like this.

I can't ask dad either. He's not here, though I doubt he would know what to say either. So, it appears I am at a loss and there's nothing I can do about it. With a heavy sigh, I spend the next two days watching TV and receiving the occasional text from Jace until, finally, the 25th arrives. It's a Friday, I don't have work, and school starts Monday. Jace wishes for me to come over, apparently Abuela is making a big dinner and wants company. I can't blame her, she probably wants to get all their minds off everything, so, I happily agree.

Of course, having a get together means that someone else is going to be there. I'm not all that surprised when I arrive at Jace's to find Mackenzie stepping out of her vehicle that pulled in seconds before I did. She hesitates to go inside, waiting patiently at her door, implying that she probably wants to talk. It's not like that bothers me but, shit, I'm not mentally prepared yet! Gimme a minute!

Stepping out of my car, I offer her up a smile that she happily returns. Her eyes though, they're puffy, like she had a good cry before she arrived. I'm sure she has had many of those and it definitely makes me a little more hesitant to speak with her. The last thing I want to do is make her more upset, not like I plan to or want to! Just...I'm shit at comforting people, ok?!

"I'm glad you could make it, Mylo," Mackenzie says just as I make it to her. She's peering up at me, now letting me see the slight red in her eyes. Damn, it actually makes me want to hug her. "It's been a long week. Jace needs a good pick me up."

I nervously rub the back of my neck, unsure how to go about this conversation. There's a lot to discuss with her or, maybe, nothing at all? I'm not entirely sure.

"I'll do my best, uh, how are you...feeling?"

Mackenzie snorts, probably finding the expression on my face funny because what the fuck am I asking that for? It's obvious how she's feeling, idiot!

"Pretty shitty, thanks for asking," she chirps but certainly not to make me feel bad. I can tell by the way she's smiling at me that she's trying to make me feel better. See, I really do suck at comforting others, it's meant to be the other way around.

"Sorry."

"No need to apologize." Mackenzie is twisting the end of her hair between her fingers. By the way she's looking at me, she has more to say so I wait patiently. "But, um, I wanted to talk to you...what happened between me and Jace, we were both at fault and-"

"We've talked already talked about it," I quickly interrupt her, not because I don't want to talk them but because her voice has started to break up like she's on the verge of tears. Judging by the water building in her eyes, she's going to cry regardless. "Listen, I understand and, yeah, at first I was uncomfortable and jealous but, after Jace explained it I...I definitely can't fault either of you for what happened. And I don't want to make you feel like you can't be a part of Jace's life. He'll always love you, you're family and I definitely don't have any problem with that."

She looks taken aback for a moment, like she was preparing herself earlier for a good lecture. Seems Jace isn't the only one that is too hard on himself.

"T-Thanks, Mylo," she ends up sniffling, the tears starting to roll down her cheeks. Shit, I didn't want to make her cry but, judging by her smile, they aren't sad tears. "I n-never meant to make you f-feel uncomfortable and, you and Jace, I-I'm just happy to see him acting like himself again. I know t-that's thanks to you and I'm so grateful."

Great, now I'm starting to cry. Someone give us some damn tissues.

I'm not sure what to do so I go with the one thing I can do, which is to give her that damn hug. Mackenzie seems a bit shocked when my arms wrap around her but she's quick to return the favor. I rest my head atop hers, listening to her hiccup and cry into my chest while I try to calm the both of us down, "You know, this is the last thing I expected to happen today."

Mackenzie giggles. "Yeah...but it's not so bad, right?"

I shake my head. "Not bad at all."

And we stay like that for a few minutes, long enough for Mackenzie and me to regain our composure. When she pulls back, her face brightens before she snaps her fingers like she has remembered something, "Oh, I have something for you!"

I'm a bit shocked when she flings open the back door to her car and, quite literally, dives into it.

"You do?" I peer over the car door to find her sliding back out with a box in her hands. From here, I can see some notebooks, textbooks and notecards. My interest is very piqued. Is she going to be my savior? I believe she is.

"They're my textbooks, notes, handouts and such from last year. Jace mentioned some classes that you have this semester so I grabbed them."

"I think I love you."

Mackenzie laughs and holds out the box for me to take, which I happily do.

"You may have different professors but they could still come in handy!"

I am very pleased with this. My smile must say so too because Mackenzie offers up a smile of her own. This certainly has gone better than I planned or ever hoped it could. However, before I can really thank her, Jace calls out to us, "What are you guys doing?"

Both Mackenzie and I glance back to find him standing on the porch with a somewhat worried expression. That's understandable but, whenever he sees our smiles, his shoulders ease up and he smiles right back.

"We're just talking!" Mackenzie calls, bouncing back and forth on the heels of her feet.

"Dinner is almost ready, come on," Jace says, gesturing for us to come inside, which I do after sitting the box of books in my backseat. Mackenzie is already in the kitchen with Abuela when I reach Jace on the porch.

He, honestly, doesn't look much better than her. His eyes are slightly puffy and red. There's bags under his eyes. His posture is a bit slumped over, like he's ready to take a nap right here and now. I didn't expect any better but, when I see him smiling at me, I know that he'll be ok. Like Mackenzie said, it was a long week for them. They need a "pick me up," which, hopefully, this dinner will be.

"What was that about?" Jace asks, reaching out for my hand. I interlock our fingers the moment his hand is in mine. It's warm.

"Just...making a new friend."

"Really?" He sounds pleased before his lips twitch back into a teasing smirk. "Because she gave you studying material?"

"Totally. She's my new goddess."

Jace rolls his eyes then pulls me in for a tight embrace. I don't mind at all, wrapping my own arms around him for a warm hug. Feeling him burying his face into the crock of my neck, it's unbelievably relieving. It sucks not being able to do much more than this for him but, if being here is all Jace needs, then I will happily stay by his side forever.

"Thanks for being patient," Jace whispers. His voice is a bit hoarse. "I know...we haven't talked much this week."

"I understand. You need to mourn, Jace. All of you do."

"It's been a year...you'd think I wouldn't feel so bad."

"That's not true," I huff, pulling away only so that I can see him. Tears are forming in his eyes. Looks like I'm going to be crying again in a second. I

reach up to press my hands to his cheeks. "You loved your brother and he loved you. You're always going to miss him, no matter how much time has passed but, that's a good thing. He gets to live on through you."

Jace doesn't speak for a moment, simply looks at me like I'm the most amazing thing he's ever seen. Then, his lip starts to quiver the tears trickle down his cheeks. I wipe them away, pressing my forehead to his in a tender moment that lasts until Jace can't take it anymore and pulls me back in.

The hug is damn near suffocating but his shoulders are shaking while the tears seem to keep flowing so I let it happen. It's not like I'm not hugging him just as tightly back, running my fingers through his hair while he cries into my shoulder, whispering quiet "thank you's" that I hush him for each time. He doesn't need to thank me. I know, if I were in his position, he'd be doing the same for me.

Of course, we were taking too long so Abuelo comes to check on us, which makes him start to cry so he joins the hug. Then Abuela and Mackenzie follow until we're just a big cuddling ball of tears but, we laugh about it afterwards during dinner.

Stories are told, tales about Mateo and Jace when they were kids, embarrassing memories and silly jokes that I will remember forever. Mackenzie has so much to tell and she's pleased to let me in on every little secret she has about Jace, which has him blushing up a storm, especially after the "wetting himself during his second grad chores concert" story. Now that had me cracking up. Jace, not so much.

Abuela brings out the family photo albums. There are three of them, three fucking full albums that are a blessing to this world. Jace is hiding behind a couch pillow most of the night while I am having a blast. Abuelo tells me about all the "ghosts" he had to fight off from Jace's closet with a wooden stick. Abuela speaks of Mateo having to read bedtime stories to Jace every night, there's just so much that we talk and talk and talk.

There are a lot of tears but a lot of laughs too. There's so much love, more in this room than I've ever felt. It's warm and comforting, just like Jace. It's an atmosphere I hope I feel for the rest of my life.

~

Next chapter is the last one so if you want to start asking questions for the usual Q&A, go ahead! Not gonna lie, I teared up a bit writing this cause my boys are so precious and I'm gonna miss them so much D:

IMG 025

Congratulations.

Danielle has sent me a congratulatory card for my first day of college, which probably would have went well if not for this absolute garbage. I thought I'd check the mail before heading to class but now I very much regret it. *Da fuq is dis?*

Opening the card, I find a quick note, something about " *do your best* " followed by her signature as well as that shit face, Chad's, and even Will's. He has horrible writing by the way, and he dotted the "i" with a smiley face. Grumbling, I shove the card back into the envelope then stomp out to my car, unsure of what exactly I'm going to do with this thing.

Throw it away? Put it on the fridge? Sit it somewhere on an end table? Stash it away in a drawer and never look at it again? Who knows!

My first instinct is to rip it to shreds and throw it in the trash. I nearly do it too, sitting in my car outside school with every intention to tear it apart. However, I feel a bit guilty because it's not like the card has done anything. It's a fucking piece of paper...but it's the thought that aggravates me.

Didn't she say that " *there are better jobs* "? So why is she sending me a card like she isn't disappointed in my life choices? And why the hell did she let that douche Chad sign it?! Will, I can guess why he did. He doesn't understand what the hell's going on because he's a child, lucky him. Maybe she was also hoping she'd get some sympathy points, that I wouldn't throw it away because a kid signed it, a kid that happens to be my half brother. Maybe he isn't so lucky.

I roll my eyes and shove the card into the dash compartment. I'll deal with it later. I'm going to be late to class.

So, after grabbing my bag, I step out of my car and head into my first class of the day. It's a general education requirement, a simple math class that I

share with Sonya and Olivia! I'm pretty happy with that, although, we did all sign up for it together on purpose. I also share my freshman seminar with them so that's cool too.

Taking a seat, I wait patiently for my friends to arrive. When they do, Olivia looks exhausted, even with Sonya holding her hand. Ah, what a lovely sight.

"You look thrilled."

Olivia glares before pulling out the chair next to me. I flinch when it screeches while Sonya physically gags at the sound. The both of them sit down, Olivia practically passing out on the desk while Sonya laughs.

"This is why I didn't pick any classes before 9am," I sing, poking Olivia's cheek until she swings her head around and snaps at me. What is she, a fucking snapping turtle?!

"Be quiet," Olivia hisses, grumbling while she buries her head in her arms. "I'm so tired."

"Sonya had a 7am class too and she looks fine." I send her a wink that she rolls her eyes at.

"She's crazy."

Sonya gasps and looks to her girlfriend with wide eyes. Olivia is probably smirking at her. I can't see from the angle I'm sitting at but, judging by the way Sonya's starting to smile, yeah, Olivia's definitely smirking or, at least, smiling at her.

"I was only in there for like 20 minutes anyways!" Olivia announces, sitting up while throwing her arms wildly in the air. "Why bother having the class if you're only going to have 20 minutes of it?"

"Because they have to go over the syllabus at some point," Sonya answers, pulling out her notebook and folder. It's about time for our 9am to start and, like Olivia's first class, we probably won't be here long.

"Can't they do that through email?"

"Do you think anyone would actually read that?"

I nod because I know I'd be one of the students that didn't read it. Olivia purses her lips into a cute pout then crosses her arms while saying nothing. Sonya looks at me with a grin then turns her attention to the board when our professor walks in. I must admit, I'm jealous of Sonya and Olivia, who get to see each other everyday even if they don't share a lot of classes together. At least they're on the same campus while my boyfriend has to be a year behind!

Can't Jace...be a genius or something and skip a year? I need some cuddles or a quick fuck in the bathroom.

Jace does not agree to the last option when I text it to him. That's fine, I'll taint him eventually.

The remainder of my day is fairly simple. All my classes focus on going over the syllabus and what our professor expects from us this semester. Mackenzie's notes will actually come in handy seeing as we shared a lot of the same general education classes and, though some of our professors are different, they are going over similar material if not the exact same material.

I even end up seeing Mackenzie on campus during lunch. She's at the student center with a group of friends. Our eyes happen to meet and, when she sees me, she sends me a smile followed by a friendly wave that I return. Though we don't speak to one another, it's not an uncomfortable interaction in the least. In fact, I imagine we'll be spending time together on campus eventually and I'm perfectly ok with that.

Olivia and Sonya claimed to be quite proud of me too after I informed them of the new friendship between Mackenzie and myself. I believe Sonya's exact words were, *"That's really mature of you, Mylo!"*

Followed by Olivia being such a bitch and asking, *"Who even are you?"*

I have wonderful friends who have such faith in me, let me tell you!

While my classes end before Jace gets out, it takes thirty minutes to get home so, by the time I'm close Jace is on his way to meet up with me. We agreed to get a bit of an early dinner to talk about our days. He's a senior and now I'm a freshman in college. There's going to be a lot going on for the both of us but, that's not entirely what I wish to discuss.

After pulling into the parking lot, I stare at my dash, still unsure of what exactly I plan to do with the letter. It's taunting me. I swear I can hear it speaking, calling out to me like a ghost. Growling, I reach over to grab it and head inside. If there's anyone that can help me with this dilemma, it's Jace.

And I feel better the moment I see him waving from the booth. Fuck, I've got it bad.

"Hey, how was your first day?" Jace asks when I slide into said booth.

"Boring. All we did was go over our syllabus. If only I had my boyfriend on campus with me. I'm sure he could find a way to keep me *entertained* ."

"Even if I was there, we wouldn't have sex in the bathroom."

"Janitor closet?"

Jace sighs and pinches the bridge of his nose.

Grinning, I give another option. "Showers in the gym? I'm sure someone has done that already."

Jace is smiling, shaking his head from side to side but I can tell he finds it funny. Good, I am hilarious after all.

"So, how was your day, *Darling* ?" I ask sweetly causing Jace to twist is nose in disgust. I bat my eyelashes at him causing him to smirk.

"Fine, we didn't do much. I napped mostly."

I snort. "Must have been nice."

"It was." Jace chuckles moments before our waitress comes to take our orders. Once she's gone, Jace finally notices the envelope sitting on the table. He furrows his brow then asks, "What's that?"

"A card...from my mom." I hand it to Jace, who hesitates to open it like he's unsure if he's allowed. When I say nothing, he pulls the card out to read the brief congratulatory message before looking at me with a confused gaze.

"So...why'd you bring it?" He asks, seeming to catch on that I brought it for a reason. Wow, he's smart. He should seriously skip a grade, damn it!

"Don't know what to do with it."

"Meaning?"

"Keep it, toss it, hide it, I don't know." I shrug, leaning back to cross my arms defensively over my chest. Feeling Jace's gaze on me makes me shiver, although, I'm not sure why.

"Why do you want to keep it?"

That's a good question that I don't really have an answer to. After another shrug, I reply, "I guess...I'd feel like an ass for throwing it away."

"And you'd feel better if you kept it?"

"No."

"Then toss it."

I stare at Jace with wide eyes for reasons unknown. I'm not sure what I expected his advice to be but, I'm happy to hear it, especially since I haven't a fucking clue what to do.

"If keeping this is going to cause you more harm than good then get rid of it," he explains, holding the card out like he wishes for me to take it. I do no such thing. "I get why you feel bad. It's about Will, right?"

My fingers dig into my arms while I bite my bottom lip. He hit that right on the head, didn't he? It was easier before to toss her letters because it was always only her but now there's a kid that I know about. I have a little brother, even if the idea of seeing him puts my teeth on edge, we're still related.

Aren't I supposed to be the loving older brother? Aren't I supposed to be responsible, realize that it isn't his fault and love him unconditionally or some shit? But...I don't think I can. Just imagining him makes my teeth grind while, at the same time, I feel like an ass for being that way.

Does it make me a bad person for wanting nothing to do with him?

"You can't put yourself through pain because of what others expect of you," Jace says, causing me to look at him with a quiet gaze. He gives me a soft smile that immediately helps relieve the tension in my shoulders. "It sucks that he's too young to understand what's going on and, yeah, he probably would like to have an older brother but...if you aren't ready, that's fine. If you aren't ever ready, that's also fine. You need to do what's best for you and, if getting rid of this letter is what you need...then do it."

Jace shakes the letter to remind me it's there, asking for me to take it from him. I don't know if I can. My chest feels like it's about to cave in but, Jace is watching me with a kind gaze, so soft and comforting that my hand moves on its' own. I reach out, take the letter from his grasp and tear it in half then again and again and again until I can't contain all the pieces and they fall to the table.

I can't lie and say it didn't make me feel better but... "You really don't think it makes me an asshole?"

Jace shakes his head. "Not at all. If the day comes that you're ready to see or speak to Will then I'll be there with you."

I give Jace a smile, one that happily returns.

"If not then that's just how it is. Your health comes first, Mylo."

"You are so getting laid when we get home."

Jace drops his head with a heavy sigh. His face is slightly flushed. "We were having such a nice moment."

"We're gonna have a nice moment tonight, I promise. Whatever you wanna do, baby, I'm down."

Jace laughs, bringing up his hands to hide his blushing face. I smile and push the remnants of the letter to the edge of the table to toss later. Once they're out of the way, I look back at Jace to see him still laughing while peering at me through his open fingers.

"What?" I ask, curious to why he's still laughing.

"Just remembering how before you ran from me in order to avoid talking about your mom," Jace answers, dropping his hands to the table while leaning towards me. I flush a bit at the memory. "This time...you came right to me."

I didn't really think about that but, he's right. A lot has changed.

I nervously shrug, evading his gaze because I fear, somehow, I'll fall for him even more. I should know I don't have to look at him in order to do that. "Yeah, so, is that a problem?"

I curse when Jace reaches across the table to grasp my wrist. With a soft tug, he easily pulls me forward so that his face is but centimeters from my own. My face goes completely red when I feel his words whispered against my lips, "Not a problem at all."

And feeling his kiss is as thrilling as the first because, it doesn't matter whether I admit it or not, I'm always falling more for Jace everyday.

~The End~

I wanted a more clean end to Mylo and his mother's story so there it is! The Q&A has already been posted so head to the next chapter if you're interested. Check out my other stories if you want to read more! I'll

leave the cheesy thanks for next chapter as per usual :) Hopefully you enjoyed Jace and Mylo's love story as much as I did!

Q&A

Will there be a sequel? Will I write other stories about them? (Ex: Shorts or one shots)

Nope.

Will Mylo ever fully stop having jealousy towards Mackenzie?

Personally, I'm of the belief that no one is ever truly devoid of jealousy. Just like you might get jealous that a friend is spending more time with someone else. It happens. It's the fact that you don't treat people like garbage and act respectfully about it that matters. Mylo will always have a little bit of jealousy, however, he trusts Jace and has no issues now with the relationship between him and Mackenzie.

Does Mylo have embarrassing photos of anyone since he's the photography kid?

Yes, Mylo always had a camera on him or it was around so he has a lot of embarrassing photos of friends and complete strangers lol

Can we have a bit of backstory on Mylo and Olivia's friendship?

Mm, there's not much to tell. Met in elementary school. Olivia was (still is) shy and quiet while Mylo is the exact opposite so you could say Olivia was drawn to him because he was so outspoken. Mylo is pretty protective of Olivia and keeps her close while also trying to get her to open up more but, they really just have normal friendship lol

Why did Danielle leave Mylo and his dad?

There's no grand answer. She simply wasn't happy. Like Mylo said, his dad worked a lot so Danielle was always at home taking care of Mylo. They were young when they had him too and she wanted to do more with her life,

have a career, travel, all that, which she did with Chad but ended up losing her son because of it.

Will Mylo ever have a talk with his mother?

No. I think Mylo's mental health was a big part of this story and there's this...strange belief among society that because someone is related by blood you should forgive them for their wrong doings. Some relationships just can't be fixed and you shouldn't bend over backwards to try and change that.

Will Mylo and Will ever become good brothers that know and care about one another?

It isn't that Mylo doesn't care. *He isn't ready* , and that's big difference . "Will is innocent in all this." Yes, and so is Mylo. He is not obligated to put himself in a bad situation that will negatively affect his mental health, even if that is unfortunate for Will, but Mylo's health is ***important.*** There will be a time when Mylo and Will can start spending time together without harming Mylo, but it definitely won't be until Will is older. I'd say 13-ish, so their mom won't be around and Mylo has had time to cope. I don't think they'll ever be best buds, but they'll at least know about each other.

Do you see any of these character as endgame for one another? As in do Jace and Mylo and Sonya and Olivia all stay together in the end?

Typically I don't see characters that get together in high school staying together. I know it's kind of everyone's dream, to find that special someone and be with them for the rest of their lives but, realistically, that isn't always the case. So, honestly, no. I imagine both couples eventually breaking up but I can also see them getting back together later in life after they've lived their lives more. And I don't care if you read on Wattpad for unrealistic stories. Someone asked. I answered. Move on.

Can we know a bit more about Sonya?

I honestly don't have a crazy amount on Sonya. She's 18 by the end of the story since her birthday is on July 8th. She's athletic, was the captain of the

girl's volleyball team in highschool, got a sports scholarship to Toho and is going for Sports Management. She's demisexual, although, at this point in her life she is unaware of that since, throughout high school, she always thought she was just too busy to have romantic attachments. In college though, I think she'll come to address herself as such.

Who, from any of your stories, do you think Mylo or Jace would get along with best, and who would they get along with worst (out of the main or fairly main characters)?

Mylo and Benji from What He Hides would be freaking hell spawns together lol They're essentially the same person except Benji is...worse. Just worse xD As for Jace, I think he'd get along best with Noah, both down to earth and nice guys. Mylo would probably hate Quinton and call him out a lot for "trying to act cool" while Jace...I honestly don't know. I feel he'd have trouble dealing with Zane but not necessarily dislike him?

How did the characters get their names? Is there some kind of story behind it?

Jace is the only one that kinda has a story. I was thinking in terms of when his parents marriage started to fail because Mateo is a more traditional spanish name that I imagine his mom and grandparents chose for him. Jace, on the other hand, is a more American style name that I feel his dad would have given him since, by the time he was born, his dad was the worst he's ever been so they were kind of cut off from his grandparents.

Mylo, Sonya, and Olivia, however, I just liked the names and wanted to use them. Seemed to fit their characters lol

How did you come up with the idea for this story?

I'm known for slow burns but I was really in the mood to write something where the characters got together really quick and it was more issues after the relationship started so the idea stemmed off Mylo confessing to a crush and the relationship just going down hill immediately.

What was it like for you to write a story that wasn't a tORTUROUS SLOW BURN FOR ONCE??

Confusing lol I'm so used to taking a lot of time to develop the crush then the relationship that when I had Mylo ask Jace out I was like, "IS THIS TOO SOON? IT HAS TO BE!" And I wasn't very good at making it seem like Mylo wasn't serious about Jace in the beginning, he honestly just wanted in his pants but it was still fun to write since I was craving something different.

What did you find the hardest to write in this story?

The pacing? Like I said, I'm used to a slow burn so I felt that the story was moving along too quickly then too slowly. Were people understanding and feeling for the characters when they had less time with them? Stuff like that.

What motivated you to share your stories?

Well, I started writing after my parents divorced. As for sharing them online, maybe it was a combo of things? Like reading others stories and wanting to put mine out there to see what happened. I've always been shy so being online is a sort of safety net for me even if it causes a lot of stress of its own lol

If you could, would you change a part of the story somewhere or are you happy with the outcome?

I'm actually pretty happy with the outcome. It's short and sweet :)

How many pages is the story?

157

How long does it approximately take for you to finish a story?

Don't really have an answer because it all depends. Pictures of Us I finished in like...two months. Just depends on how long the story is, if life gets in the waya and how motivated I am to finish it.

What do you enjoy the most about writing?

Freedom. Escaping. Just delving into my own imagination and being able to live all these different lives, seeing from others perspectives and, hopefully, teaching others to do the same.

Do you prefer writing character-driven or plot-driven stories?

Character-driven. Obviously a good plot is necessary but I feel that internal conflicts are so much easier to relate to and can really push the external issues to a whole other level. People are fascinating, how they feel, why they feel the way they do, putting yourself in another person's shoes is so eye opening. When a story can do that and make you go from " *Oh, I don't get why they're doing that* " to " *I wouldn't do that, but I can totally understand and respect why they are,* " it's the most amazing feeling in the world.

Are you an "architect" writer or a "gardener" writer? (someone who plans out their whole stories before writing, or someone who plans the story as you write it?)

More architect. I usually have character sheets, main plot points, and sometimes basic outlines per chapter done before I write a story. I already know the beginning, middle and end before I even write the first chapter.

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Finally, once again, I'd like to thank you all for the continuous love and support. There are many of you that follow every single story I write and that means so much to me. Knowing I have you guys to back me up, give me advice or make me smile is so crazy that sometimes I still don't believe it.

When I want to try something new, you're right there. It means a lot to me that you're willing to give my stories a shot, even if they aren't always your typical cup of tea or differ from my usual stories. I plan to continue writing and continue bringing your stories that, hopefully, you'll love. Thanks so much for going on this journey with Mylo and Jace!
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Much Love,
Twoony

Well, that's it for the Q&A so you know what that means! Shameless self advertising :D

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Thanks so much for reading!

Fan Art

Any fan art with permission of the artist will be posted here ^^

Mylo and Jace from graduation day, omfg they're so adorable! Look at that smile, look at those freckles, aaaaaaahhhhhhh!!!!

Artwork by DeezMrGalid on twitter and check out their Instagram deez_mr_galid